

BLUE EYES AND GREY
BARONESS ORCZY

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Blue Eyes and Grey

NOVELS BY
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The Honourable Jim
The Triumph of the Scarlet
Pimpernel
The Scarlet Pimpernel
The Laughing Cavalier
Leatherface
I Will Repay
The Old Man in the Corner
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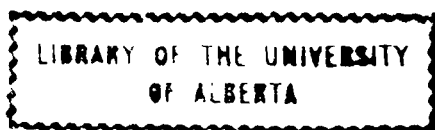
HODDER AND
STOUGHTON
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Blue Eyes and Grey

BY
BARONESS ORCZY

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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Dedication

To
the President,
Directors and all
connected with that
marvellous organisation
the Canadian Pacific Railway.
To you whose unparalleled kindness
and generous hospitality enabled me to
visit your marvellous country and the scenes
where the regeneration of a young soul cast down by
misfortunes in the Old Country actually took place,
do I dedicate this faithful and true record of sin and of
atonement. For obvious reasons I have modified even the
incidents of the story, in order to preserve the anonymity
of the principal characters, but the story is a true
one in its main facts. It aroused my keenest
interest and sympathy at the time that it
occurred, but I could not have written the
book had it not been for the happy
time you gave me in Canada.
In all gratitude and
friendship, therefore, I
dedicate "Blue Eyes
and Grey" to
you.

Monte Carlo, 1928.

EMMUSKA ORCZY.

2072996

*The characters in this book are entirely
fictitious and not one of them is the portrait
of any living person*

THEY were waiting together on the landing-stage. The liner from Montreal was late owing to the fog. But the fog had lifted and the ship might loom out of the darkness at any moment. And these last few minutes were so precious—so very, very precious. They had had an excellent dinner at the Château Frontenac; everybody had been so kind; it was hard to leave it all, the gaiety, the lavish hospitality, the new friends, and above all Fay. She had walked with him as far as the landing-stage, so as to put off the inevitable farewell as long as possible. Here in Quebec there had been little if any fog; the waning moon, always so unaccountably mysterious and different to other moons, threw a shower of diamonds over the swift current of the great river, and endowed even distant Levis, its few towers and irregular buildings, with a strange, poetic beauty.

To Amos there was beauty everywhere, beauty and sadness. He was very young, only twenty-two, he was in love for the first time in his short life, and the object of his adoration was standing close beside him, with her head partly hidden under her closely fitting little *cloche* hat, and partly buried in the fur collar of her coat, so that all he could see of her face was her eyes, those large, luminous eyes with that far-off look in them peculiar to dwellers in vast spaces. Only

yesterday it had seemed as if this wonderful happiness would last for ever and ever. When her eyes had softened and her hand become warm and yielding, when presently she had turned and nestled her head against his shoulder, he felt that the world had become a paradise in which he and Fay could dwell for ever.

He had forgotten that he would have to go away on the morrow, to return to England. His passage was booked: he had to go back. For one thing he would have to work now, to make a name for himself and a home for her. His mind was full of schemes, his whole being filled with ambition. If father was alive now he would no longer have cause for complaint that Amos was for ever idling his time away, that Amos would *not* work: neither at Harrow nor at Oxford. He would not work. Father used to send for him periodically and read him endless lectures. Mother, his pretty mother with the white hands and crimson lips, would weep and make him promise that he would turn over a new leaf and work—really work: and neither father's lectures nor mother's tears would have the slightest effect on his incorrigible supineness, his indolence of mind. Life was so nice! there were so many nice things to do at school or at college, whilst work was usually dreary and school cricket tiresome.

"I would forgive you," father used to say, "if at least you were good at games. Look at John, captain of his house eleven, or James, a double blue at Oxford, or else Harry, first-class honours in law. Games or work, my boy, you do neither."

It was quite right. He didn't. That time when father and mother came down to Harrow to watch the cricket, Amos, who had been most unwillingly pushed into his house's junior team, was seen at a critical moment in the match practising standing on his head, when he should have been fielding. Neither at games nor at work was Amos any good. But give him a pony, or later on a horse, give him a high jump or a water jump, give him a chance of putting up his fists, or give him a foil, an *épée* or a sabre, and he would give a good account of himself. Unfortunately those things weren't thought much of at school or college; not like games or the boat, so, of course, father was not satisfied.

All that, however, was going to be so different now. With Fay as his aim in life, Amos was setting out to conquer the world.

They had spent a wonderful evening last night making plans:

"You wouldn't mind," Amos had suggested tentatively, "if I went into business, would you? Shipping pays awfully well, you know. Or tea, or rubber," he concluded with a vague gesture of his hand which held the cigarette.

Fay, who had been born on the prairie and who had worked in Neave's stores during vacation time while she was completing her education at Toronto University, before her father had become the rich man he now was, had assured him that she wouldn't mind it in the least if he went into shipping, or tea, or rubber.

Nor would she mind living in England. She had visited England last year with her mother and

father, and at a dance given by a mutual friend she had met Amos. They had quickly become pals—but only pals. Amos at the time was paying marked attention to two or three beautiful débutantes in London, and the Canadian girl, though pretty, was nothing like so smart and up-to-date as they were. But somehow or other he took to Fay, and Fay to him. And when the tragedy occurred—the awful tragedy—when his mother with the delicate white hands and crimson lips went off with that cad Burton-Conroy, and his father, in despair at the wreckage of his home, put a bullet through his brains, Amos had remembered the kind Canadian friends: Mr. and Mrs. Mazeline—and he remembered Fay.

They wrote to him, kind letters of sympathy, and asked him to come out and pay them a visit. He needed distraction, for his nerves were all on edge, and he went. He had spent four lovely months in Canada; had stayed with the Maze-lines at their pretty bungalow on the lakes, and at their town house in Montreal; had travelled across the great continent and seen this new world now awakening from its age-long sleep. But above all he had felt this great love for Fay Mazeline growing in his heart, until his whole being seemed transformed. They had gone on long trail-rides together, they had tramped and motored together, and stood hand-in-hand, mute and awed by the glories of nature made manifest in giant canyons and turbulent waterfalls. They had played tennis and danced, and bathed in the lakes, and had thought that life henceforth would flow on for ever in the same

smooth and happy way. Then one day had come the summons for Amos to return home. What money he had was giving out; the lawyer who at one time had seemed so accommodating, had suddenly cried a halt and refused further supplies. Amos must come home and see to things: that was the trumpet call that sounded the knell of happy Canadian days. It found the Mazelines at Quebec on a visit to some relations and Amos Beyvin as usual in their company.

A few days spent in the old historic town, a few rambles in Kent Park or the Île d'Orléans, and now Shed 18, with the tender moored against it, gently balanced on the bosom of the great river, and the St. Lawrence flowing silently and ceaselessly to the great ocean which for endless days to come would lie between Amos and all that he had learned to love.

"You won't forget me?" he murmured over and over again, clumsily, stupidly, just because he felt choked and no other words would come so readily as those.

At first Fay had responded with a shake of the head, trying very hard not to cry. But when he asked her for the fifth time if she wouldn't forget she said rather huskily:

"You hurt me when you say that, Amos."

So after that he couldn't say anything more, chiefly because no other words would come, and also because there were people about, walking up and down, and they might overhear. He longed—longed with painful intensity for one more kiss: that last one snatched in a dark corner of the lounge at the Château Frontenac was the

most wonderful thing he had ever experienced in his life, and he longed with all his might for one more taste of it. This horrible crowded stage, how he hated it! how he hated all those people who were walking up and down, not knowing, not understanding! And how he hated this great silent river, and the liner which presently would loom out of the darkness and carry him away all those hundreds of miles from Fay!

"I'll make pots of money, you'll see," he contrived to say after a little while.

"I'm sure," she whispered.

"And then I'll come and fetch you."

"I shall be ready."

"And we'll get married."

"Yes!"

She gave a great sigh, for she felt herself choking with sobs, which she was determined to keep back. And suddenly Amos felt her little hand firmly gripping his wrist.

"Look," she whispered.

She was looking up at the sky, and obediently he looked up too: then held his breath, awed, amazed, for he had never seen anything like it before. The whole sky was suffused with Northern Lights. It looked as if giant hands were wielding filmy veils of the palest mauve and rose and chrysoprased, moving them across the surface of the night, winding them in and out as if in folds of translucent gauze.

A voice from somewhere out of the crowd said:

"I've never seen such a fine display!"

But to Amos those pale, ever-moving tints

were not a mere manifestation of nature, they were the robes of an unseen goddess—and that goddess his own destiny. Movement and colour and vaporous, intangible beauty, through which the waning moon shone with a golden radiance and the stars glittered with a promise of something great and wonderful that lay beyond. The word “Wonderful” rose out of his heart but never reached his lips. He could only clutch Fay’s hand—that little hand which was the fulfilment of all that those mysterious lights did promise him.

Even the ultimate farewell, when at last the liner was in sight and the tender put off with him on board, seemed less poignant than Amos had feared. Slowly the distance widened between himself and that slim little figure on the landing stage. She stood there straight as a young sapling from the vast forests of her native land, clutching her small handbag, with fingers interlocked in a gesture of determination not to break down till she was out of his sight. Two or three women, who like herself had come to see some dear ones off, were sobbing audibly. But Fay did not cry. The tears would come later; when she was alone.

At the last, when the tender was alongside the liner, and all the passengers hustled in order to get on board, Amos took a final long glance at the land where he had tasted such marvellous happiness. The great mass of the picturesque hotel towering above the river was lit up by hundreds of little lights. And on the bridge of Shed 18, Fay was standing with her face turned to

the sky. Overhead the Titans and the gods moved and waved the folds of their luminous robes. A radiance of pale tints vied with the golden light of the moon for mastery over the night.

And then the liner slowly began to move downstream.

BOOK I
The Old World

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter I

AMOS BEYVIN had been taken back to the cells, in anticipation of the verdict.

The verdict! Oh, my God!

He knew what it would be, of course. He was guilty, and he knew it. So did those twelve men who had sat wooden-faced and impassible whilst an array of witnesses was brought one by one to tell the tale of that awful night. All the while that this went on—this swearing-in, these examinations and cross-examinations and summing-up and what-not, the whole paraphernalia with which Justice chooses to surround herself — Amos Beyvin had only been conscious of an unendurable feeling of impatience. Why all this? Why didn't they get on with it? He had owned up to it, had in legal parlance pleaded guilty; then why all this? Two days! It had been hell and worse than hell. But now it was all drawing to an end, and in a few minutes it would be all over. The judge would put on a black cap and say something about God's mercy in connection with death and the hangman's rope.

Amos had often in the past read about such things in the papers. Some wretched devil had been sent to the gallows, and Amos would shrug his shoulders and quickly turn to the Sporting Column, which was more amusing. He didn't

think of these creatures as wretched devils in those days—that is if he thought of them at all. No! he was just indifferent or else thought: “What a brute! deserves hanging, of course.”

Amos wondered vaguely how many of his friends, when they read the verdict in his case, would say with an indifferent shrug: “That brute Beyvin! deserves hanging, of course.” They would be the righteous ones, his relations, people who had never been involved in anything more exciting than a friendly game of bridge—people, too, who had looked askance at him because of his mother—his poor little mother—and because of his father, who would not face the world after she left him, and had put a bullet through his brains. These people, of course, would cast their eyes up to the ceiling and murmur: “Of course, my dear, what can you expect? With such a mother, and such a father? The boy never had a chance.”

They didn’t know about Fay! The one chance Amos had had in his life. A chance which he had thrown aside like a fool, the criminal fool, that he was. And yet he had loved her, loved her with an intensity that he had not gauged until now. That night when the liner bore him away down the St. Lawrence River, and the lights of Quebec slowly faded away in the distance, he had felt a heart-ache such as he had never experienced before or since—a heart-ache which in itself was akin to happiness, for it taught him what love really meant, the joy of perfect union, the sweet sadness of enforced farewells. His only anxiety in those days was that Fay might forget: that she might forget him and the impassioned words which he

had whispered in her ear: that she might forget that wonderful kiss which had at the time seemed to weld her whole soul to his own. And because of this anxiety which was ever present, he had written to her every day, putting his whole heart into every word he wrote. He sent a long budget off to her by the tender some hours before the liner entered the Mersey, and another when he landed at Liverpool. And after that for weeks and months he wrote every day, and once a week he had a reply from her.

She never wrote much, didn't Fay. It was not her way. She never said much either by word of mouth or on paper. She would tell him about the friends at Montreal where she spent the winter season, about the lectures she had heard, her activities in connection with the Women's Club, the articles she had written and which had appeared in the *Gazette* or the *Star*: and then right at the end there would be a few words, a phrase or two, so sweet and tender, just like herself: they would send Amos wandering back into that paradise which her kiss had opened up for him; he would press the paper to his lips, the paper on which her hand had rested, and he would close his eyes and, as in a vision, see her slim figure standing on the bridge of Shed 18 wrapped in her fur coat, and her dear face turned up to the sky. He would hear her whisper: "Look!" and obediently he would gaze upwards, too, and see the Northern lights, the titanic veils, pale rose and mauve and turquoise, move and wave across the sky like luminous gauze draperies wielded by giant hands.

Fay was to him like the spirit of those lights,

pure and radiant as they. For weeks he wrote to her every day and had his weekly letter from her. He was very busy looking for a job: but none had presented itself as yet. A little money had come to him from his father, so he felt that he need not hurry. When he did take on a job it should be a good one: one that had possibilities and a future, so that he and Fay could get married before this year was out. As a matter of fact there was the prospect of something very good turning up soon. He had the promise of an introduction to a big shipping magnate who was returning to England from Australia in June, and who had said to a friend of Amos out there that he would be requiring a young secretary when he returned, one with a public-school and university education. The very thing for Amos.

He wrote to Fay about that and asked her advice. Long before her answer came he had already decided not to rush into anything in a hurry, but to wait for the return of the shipping magnate from Australia. From what his friend said, he, Amos, was just the very man for this secretarial job, which, by the way, was worth £1,200 a year, to commence. So as there were three or four months' time to kill until June, Amos decided to join a party of young people who were motoring down to the South of France. They would stay in Paris a few days, which, of course, would be very educative, as they would visit museums, picture galleries and the Comédie Française. And after that they would drive through gorgeous scenery and spend a month at Cannes, Nice or Monte Carlo.

Still Amos wrote to Fay every day—that is while they were in Paris. The trouble came when he and the party were motoring. Driving all day, tired at night, up betimes, Amos missed writing one day, then two. He wrote as soon as they arrived at Cannes, explaining everything. Then somehow he missed another day, and then another, and presently he was writing to Fay twice a week—oh! quite regularly for a time, telling her all about the Riviera and the beautiful sunshine and the warmth, so different from the snow of the prairies, or the cold, moonlit nights on the lakes.

Amos never actually perceived that he was drifting. His love for Fay was as great as it had ever been, of that he was absolutely convinced; but, of course, to write to her every day, when she was still content to reply once a week, was ridiculous. And once when at a dinner party in the Casino he gave a description to his friends of the wonderful Northern Lights which he had seen on the St. Lawrence, Muriel Lamprière had shrugged her pretty shoulders and said, laughing: "Brrr! how cold! you are making me shiver, Amos!" and she had darted a queer glance at him out of her large dark-rimmed eyes and added: "I suppose the Canadian girls make you shiver, too! They are very cold, aren't they?"

Cold? Amos at once thought of Fay. Was she as cold as those pale-toned Northern Lights? as distant? as elusive? He caught himself comparing her to Muriel Lamprière. She certainly was not as gay, nor nearly as amusing. Muriel could keep a crowd amused with her stories and

her remarks, and she could make a man's nerves tingle with the sparkle of her eyes and play of her lips. And then Fay was just herself, exquisite as a snowdrop, radiant with life, tender and sympathetic. Muriel with her thin shoulders and rouged lips, and her long legs and pointed knees, was all very well for an evening's amusement, but imagine her at breakfast with pale lips and tired eyes, her nerves on edge, her temper trying.

Amos was quite glad when she went away with an aunt to spend a month in Rome, and when he heard presently that she was engaged to an American millionaire. He came back to London and, in his own words, "had a hectic season." Once a week he wrote and told Fay all about it—balls, theatres, dinners, Ascot, Goodwood, Lord's and so on. He was asked to join a house party for shooting in Scotland, then he had some hunting in Yorkshire, and was back in London for the "little season." Busy wasn't the word! Impossible to write every week! Fay would understand! He simply hadn't had a minute this past fortnight. He thanked her for her last two letters and loved her more ardently than ever. Soon he would have some good news for her about a splendid job which he had in view.

And so Amos continued to drift. He hardly noticed it when Fay's letters arrived more and more irregularly, when a whole month went by once without a letter from her. Folly! Criminal folly! It was too late now to regret. Love and life were going away from him together, hand-in-hand. Both had been very sweet, very precious: and both had turned to Dead Sea fruit. Life with

all the gaiety of the past two years, ending as it did in such unutterable shame: and love which was nothing now but a might-have-been.

Would Fay ever know? Every coherent thought which had coursed through Amos Beyvin's mind since that terrible night had centred on this: "Would Fay know?" would his miserable case be of sufficient importance to be reported in the Canadian press? or would an English paper casually picked up reveal to her the awful tragedy? He hoped with the full strength of his soul that she would never hear, but only think that he had gradually learned to forget.

But if Fay did know, what would she feel? Pity for him or contempt? Love, of course, would be dead—killed by his own folly—— and there was Muriel. If Fay knew anything she would know about Muriel. Poor Muriel! Had she succeeded in slipping away, or was she caught like the others? Amos did not know. He knew nothing since that night. But if Muriel was caught, did the American break off the engagement? Amos believed that certain Americans were very strait-laced, and this Mr. Colin J. Ross might be one of those: he might object to his future wife being mixed up in an affair of this sort. If so, it would be hard on Muriel. So unfair! It was not her fault, but the world is so unfair, and always harder on the woman than the man. He himself knew quite a number of people who would say that it was that horrid Lamprière girl who had dragged poor young Beyvin to night-clubs and made him drink champagne, till he didn't know what he was doing.

So unfair! Muriel enjoyed night-clubs, of course, just as other girls did. She loved dancing and champagne and the merry crowd: she loved all that because she was young and pretty, and well known in society; and people looked at her with admiration and made much of her. Wasn't it natural? It was he, Amos, who had persuaded her to come to that Knickerbocker place. How did he know, how could he guess that the police had their eye on it? that champagne was sold there during prohibited hours? He had never given a thought to prohibited hours; when he wanted champagne he ordered it, and when the waiter brought it, he drank it just like everybody else. As for baccarat, well, of course, he liked a game and so did Muriel. But except for the fact that he lost a great deal more than he could afford, he didn't know that he was doing anything wrong—meaning anything contrary to law— He had never given anything like that a thought. Other people played baccarat; why shouldn't he? and on the rare occasions when he won, he enjoyed giving Muriel a few little trifles that pleased her—a cigarette case, a holder, a pretty handbag. True, money was getting low, but then he was almost sure of getting a well-paid job very soon.

How could he guess?

But they did come that night—the police. It seems they had the right to force their way into the club, and to arrest people for drinking champagne at 2 a.m. and for playing baccarat. Old Gottlieb, the manager of the club, was so funny! He raved and ranted like a lunatic, and rushed about, thrusting bottles under the tables, pouring

champagne into the flower vases, and sweeping the counters off the baccarat table into his capacious pockets—his eyes bulging out of his head like those of a Pekinese dog. Amos couldn't help laughing at the recollection of him even now. He threw back his head and laughed and the two constables in charge of him looked queerly, first at him and then at one another: they were not sure if a prisoner who had been tried on such a serious charge, and who was awaiting the verdict, ought to be allowed to laugh like this.

"Now then! None o' that!" already hovered on their lips. But almost immediately afterwards the prisoner ceased laughing and once more took up the listless, dejected attitude which was quite a right and proper one.

Amos had recollected his own feelings when the police made their entry into the gaming room. Four men there were, two in plain clothes and two in the familiar blue. They were huge, broad-shouldered men, all of them, and pushed their way in, in a manner that made Amos's blood boil, past the ladies who were there, all beautifully dressed, jostling them if they happened to be in their way. Gottlieb—the mean little cad—at once became all smiles. Amos didn't mind his being jostled and pushed about and told to hold his tongue. The waiters had all decamped. One of the men in plain clothes had a note-book in his hand, he was asking people their names and jotting them down in his book. Amos heard one or two of them, whom he knew well, give false names and addresses. This gave him the idea to do likewise, both for himself and for Muriel Lamprière. He

had just settled that he would call himself Albert Smith, of 234 Regent Street, and say that Muriel was his sister Alice, when he felt her edging close up to him, and her hand, which was terribly hot, come in contact with his.

"Amos, I don't want them to catch me here," she whispered. "I don't want Colin Ross to know about it—he would— Oh! I must get away, Amos, before they see me."

Her voice was shaking and Amos knew that she was crying. They were in the rear of a small knot of people who were all huddling together at the end of the room, like so many scared rabbits. The man with the note-book was working his way in their direction. Fantastic names and impossible addresses were given to him by most people.

"We'll verify these names," he said quite seriously and without a smile when that young ass Tommy Tredgold gave his name as Jack Tip-toes and his address as the Crystal Palace. "And I needn't remind any of you that it'll go 'ard with 'em as made a false declaration. Next, please!"

This was to Lady April Croune, who, blushing and trembling, forgetting how to smirk, and actually taking her cigarette out of her mouth, gave her correct name and address. Amos could not help smiling grimly within himself, when he thought of what her father, Lord Flint, would say when he saw his daughter's name in the papers in connection with a police raid on a gambling club.

"Amos, can't you get me away?" Muriel entreated him in an agitated whisper, "before I am forced to give my name?"

Amos looked about him, rather helplessly at

first. He didn't know the place very well, but somehow he was deriving both courage and intuition through the pressure of Muriel's hand in his. He felt in a measure responsible for her safety. A little to the left of him there was a heavy curtain which looked as if it masked a window or else a door. It might be a door. Amos edged towards it, gently dragging Muriel along with him. He came to the curtain and peeped behind it. It revealed a door slightly ajar. Through the aperture a pair of eyes were peering scarified.

A current of outer air proclaimed the certainty of a window close by.

"Could you climb out of a window?" Amos whispered hurriedly to Muriel.

"I think so," she replied.

"In your high-heeled shoes and flimsy frock?"

"Never mind about those," she retorted impatiently, "so long as I can get away."

He held the curtain aside and pointed to the door. Muriel slipped through, sylph-like, into the room, pushing the owner of the scarified eyes out of the way. Amos heard an angry exclamation followed by agitated and rapid conversation. He was about to follow. Why not? It would be a good thing if he, too, could get away, and he might be of service to Muriel in her adventurous climb through the window. He was behind the curtain, when it was suddenly dragged aside and he was confronted by the man in plain clothes, note-book in hand, who asked him peremptory questions, to which Amos could not reply, because he was stretching every nerve to try to catch

the slightest sound that might come from the room behind him.

Anyway, he thought that he must keep this man talking for a few minutes, just to give Muriel time to get away. There was an awful din going on in the gaming room. Everybody was chattering: Gottlieb, the little cad, more volubly than the rest. Through the chatter now and again would rise a voice like a booming bell: "Now then! None o' that!" or else: "We'll verify that, and, as I say, if a false declaration 'as been made——" A minute, two, perhaps, had gone by. The man in plain clothes ordered Amos to get out of the way of the door. But Amos would not do that. He felt that he must hold his ground a little while longer, so as to give Muriel a little more time. She would be in difficulties because of her high-heeled shoes and her flimsy frock. Perhaps someone in there took pity on her and lent her a cloak of some sort. Anyway, girls were bad at climbing, and God only knew what would happen if she fell and broke her ankle. There might be more of these men in blue the other side of the house.

"Now then! None o' that!" The booming voice was close to his ear. The man with the note-book tried to push him aside with a movement of his heavy shoulders. Amos, on the other hand, only wished to gain time: so he stood his ground. He didn't mean to fight. He didn't particularly care whether the man with the note-book took down his name and address or not: all he wanted was to give Muriel time to get away. But the man with the note-book was equally determined to stop her or anyone else.

"You 'ad a young lady with you just now," he said to Amos, "where's she got to?"

"I don't know what you mean," Amos retorted defiantly.

He felt very hot, uncomfortably hot: probably he had drunk too much champagne. All the lights, too, suddenly appeared to be burning red and there was a kind of red film in front of his eyes. It was this film which made him hate the sight of the man with the note-book, and hate the sound of that voice which boomed out at intervals; "Now then: None o' that."

Amos was quite sure that it was the man with the note-book who first seized hold of him by the collar. How dared he? Insolent brute! So Amos hit out and knocked him down. At once the din rose to a tumult. Chatter was drowned in yells and shrieks, whilst hands reached out for Amos, large hands, heavy hands, that descended on his shoulders, his arms, his wrists. They held him so tightly that he could no longer move, or he would surely have hit out again.

And then, all of a sudden, as if by magic, the tumult ceased, and a weird, deathlike silence ensued. Amos could hear quite distinctly the ticking of the clock on the mantel-shelf close by, also the throbbing in his brain. He wanted to raise his hand to his forehead, which felt burning hot: but he found that he could not raise one hand without the other, and that something very weighty held him down. He threw up his head and looked about him. A lot of people were crowded together in the opposite corner of the room: girls in their flimsy frocks and high-heeled

shoes, men in their evening clothes, not looking quite so smart as they had done an hour or two ago. Their faces looked very white: even the girls' cheeks looked white under the rouge. Amos caught sight of that silly ass Tommy Tredgold, who looked like a scared guinea-pig, and Jimmy Nutall: and there was Marjorie Condamine with her funny round face. Amos wondered why they looked so scared. He was feeling a little cooler now, and the red film had been lifted from his eyes. He looked down at his wrists—and then straight out before him. At first he only wondered why that chap with the note-book was lying full length on the floor, and why two men in blue were bending over him; and then he saw the blood—on the corner of the marble mantel-shelf, and on the floor—staining the carpet—a huge red stain like the film which had obscured his eyes.

.

“Now then, you'd best come along quietly!”

Amos heard himself murmuring something about his collar being undone: and he felt a pair of hands putting it right for him. His overcoat was put across his shoulders and his hat upon his head.

Then he went along quietly.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter II

AND life was not to be ended after all. There would be the shame—the eternal shame—of course, but not death, which would have been for-

getfulness. So much, much better—so restful. Why didn't the old man there put on his black cap and say something about "God have mercy on your soul!" Amos had read about such things before—in the newspapers—funny that they should happen to him!

But were they happening to him? Amos wasn't sure. He didn't think that it could possibly be himself who was standing here in the dock, between two men in blue, and that this business about two years' penal servitude referred to him. There was also something about the jury having taken a lenient view! What did it all mean anyway? And what was penal servitude? Amos hadn't the least idea. It was something shameful—degrading, of course; something from which no man ever recovered. Something far worse than the hangman's rope, which after all did put an end to things.

The man in blue tapped him on the shoulder and he took a last look round at the stuffy room where such funny things had been happening to him. He caught sight of one or two faces that he knew: the Nutalls, with whom he had motored down to the Riviera the winter before last, and Lady Vousman, with whom he had dined that night before he went on to the Knickerbocker Club. And there, of course, was Muriel Lamprière, looking as usual very smart and surrounded by equally smart young men, one on each side of her, and one sitting in the row behind who was leaning forward and whispering something that made her laugh.

She met Amos's glance for a moment and then

quietly turned her head away. Probably she was still vexed with him for taking her to the Knickerbocker that night. Amos didn't know what happened there after he went along quietly with the men in blue: but he thought now that Mr. Colin J. Ross had remained loyal to Muriel or she wouldn't be looking quite so smart and gay.

It was all very strange, very queer! And things remained strange and queer all the time. That same night, for instance, after the verdict, in the prison cell: Amos slept quite well, for he was very tired, even though the bed, such as it was, was terribly hard, and he was rather hungry, because his stomach had turned against the food which had been given to him in the evening. And, of course, he didn't like turning out quite so early in the morning. But on the whole, things didn't seem so bad, no doubt because Amos didn't feel that they were really happening to him. He had an idea that he was dreaming—a long, long dream, somewhat in the nature of *Alice in Wonderland*, and he made up his mind that when he woke he would write a book about it. He even thought of the title *Amos in Policeland*. That would be a good title, which would help to sell the book like hot cakes, and he would make no end of money out of it, so that he and Fay could get married before the year was out. He had heard that a recent successful novel had brought the author £100,000; so that would be all right.

All this while he was attempting to wash in that impossibly small basin, and while he tried to get his teeth through that impossibly hard chunk of bread. The clothes which he was ex-

pected to put on made him laugh. "If those fellows at the Knickerbocker could see me now!" he mused. And he couldn't help smiling at the thought of that young ass Tommy Tredgold sticking his monocle in his eye and remarking intelligently: "By Gad!" which was his favourite expression. Then all sorts of funny things were done to him, such as cutting his hair—which did want cutting by the way. And a pompous old thing in a black frock-coat looked at his tongue and his teeth and pummelled him about rather unpleasantly.

Amos couldn't have told you afterwards when first the word "Dartmoor" struck his ear: or whether he ever heard it at all; it was more that the thing itself penetrated his inner consciousness from the atmosphere about him. But somehow he knew presently that he was going to Dartmoor. He had read about Dartmoor in the papers, of course. Sometimes a poor devil would escape from there and the papers would be full of the hunt after him. He would invariably be run to earth. Someone would denounce him to the police, and what happened to him after that newspaper-readers neither knew nor cared.

And now he, Amos Beyvin, who had often been described by the society papers as one of the smartest young men about town, present at the Duchess of X.'s ball, or Lady Y. Z.'s dinner dance, he, Amos Beyvin, was going to Dartmoor in those preposterous clothes, travelling third-class, sitting between two stolid men in blue, with those horrid things round his wrists, which had already made a sore place in his flesh. It cer-

tainly was the queerest dream! And it was lasting longer than any dream he had ever experienced.

At one time at Waterloo, just before he was pushed into that horrible third-class carriage he had a glimmer of hope that the journey down to this unknown Dartmoor was not going to be quite so unpleasant after all. He had caught a glimpse in the interior of the carriage of a nice-looking girl, in some kind of nurse or Salvation Army uniform, sitting there with a businesslike handbag on her knee, and rather podgy white hands demurely folded over it. A young man came along with an armful of papers and magazines: he came up to the carriage door and said:

"Come along, Lena. You oughtn't to have got in here."

"Oh! oughtn't I?" she replied complacently.

Suburban, of course. In ordinary life Amos wouldn't have looked twice at her. But now——

Clutching her handbag, she stepped out of the carriage, not condescending to take the hand which the young man held out to aid her. Amos noted that she wore cotton stockings and serviceable-looking shoes and that her skirt was unfashionably long. As she halted for a few seconds on the platform, she turned and glanced in the direction of Amos and the two men in blue, with whom were a couple of railway police and a station official. Amos caught her glance. She had blue eyes—china-blue eyes—round and wide open, which gave her a rather silly expression,

and from under her closely fitting nurse's cap a stray curl protruded, provokingly. As she noticed Amos's clothes and hands a look of womanly pity stole into her round blue eyes, her expression became very sweet, tender and compassionate. It was the first gentle look which Amos had encountered since that awful night, and a curious pang of self-pity shot through his heart at the thought that she would not be travelling in this railway carriage, and that he would be journeying for hours in dreary solitude.

However, there was nothing for it but to obey the order to get in. He was made to sit down with his back to the engine between the two men in blue. The last he had seen of "Lena" was her getting into another carriage, lower down the line.

It was funny to think that he would not see London again for two years, if ever. The suburbs through which the train was proceeding at slow speed he could easily have dispensed with. They were drab and ugly. Amos had, in the past, never given them more than a cursory glance. But now as the grey ribbons of endless streets, of more or less well-kept back gardens, of lines adorned with the family washing, of chimney-pots and brick walls wound past his eyes, he felt a sudden affection for them. They were a bit of home, the dirty and ragged edges of a lovely picture on which he would perhaps never look again.

Amos had, of course, lost count of time. The blinds of the carriage were drawn down, so he

had no means of ascertaining the hour, when passing through or stopping at railway stations. They had left Waterloo at half-past four, so it might well be somewhere about seven o'clock now. His midday meal had consisted of soup and a hunk of hard brown bread; the bread he had not been able to eat; the soup was wet and lukewarm and that was all there had been to it, and some hours had gone by since then. He supposed that the two men in blue had had a jolly good dinner, and probably tea before they started: lucky dogs, thought Amos.

They exchanged very few words on the way, just sat there, one on each side of Amos, stolid, perspiring hard, and breathing audibly. Presumably they knew every yard of this dreary journey, for neither of them took the trouble of peeping, even once, through the blinds.

"Hello! what's the matter with you?"

The gruff voice roused Amos from a state of somnolence into which he had fallen. He raised his head and looked in the direction whence the gruff voice had come. It was the man on his left who had spoken, and with fat forefinger he was drawing the other man's attention to something on Amos's knee. So Amos mechanically looked down on his knee also. There was a large, sticky, red stain there, on his preposterous trousers, where his wrist was resting.

"Shall I take 'em off?" the man on the right was asking.

Amos wondered vaguely if he was referring to the preposterous trousers, and the other man said:

"May as well. 'E can't do no harm."

"Seems a bit daft to me," the man on the right went on.

It was getting dark. Overhead, in the low roof of the carriage, a feeble light had been turned on and flickered intermittently. The train was going at a great speed over points and round curves. The jolting and shaking were very uncomfortable and Amos's body was aching all over, particularly one wrist. Looking down, he saw that it was bleeding and had caused the sticky stain upon his trousers. The man on the right took off those heavy, horrid things which had made Amos's wrists ache so painfully. It was a great comfort, and Amos said quite politely: "Thanks awfully," to the man who had thus relieved him.

The shaking and jolting became more violent every moment.

"What a rate 'e's driving," the man on the right remarked sententiously.

"'E's going too fast over them points," the other agreed.

Those words were the last coherent sounds which reached Amos's consciousness. Everything after that was confusion first and then silence as if of death. Soon after the man had spoken there was a terrific crash. All the noises in the world—roars, bombilations, rappings and hisses, shrieks and vociferations—seemed to have concentrated in one deafening cacaphony of sound. Amos felt as if he had suddenly been hurled into space, and as if during this meteoric flight, titanic fists were raining blows upon his

head, his shoulders, his legs. For a few seconds he was conscious of a terrible pain in his whole body, which grew more and more intense until he knew that he could not stand it any longer and live.

For a brief while the tired spirit fled, into the world that lies beyond pain. There it sought repose and forgetfulness, and found it in the blue, mysterious ether where dwell the stars. The body lay quiescent and at peace: the eyes closed, the jaw dropping slightly, as if death had lingered here for a moment—thoughtful and doubting—then passed indifferently by.

The first return to consciousness came with the sound of a voice, a word here and there, meaningless and detached. "Not dead—Let me—I tell you—" Just a jumble, which presently became more coherent. "He is not dead, I tell you—Don't tell me—Give me a hand, will you?"

And when Amos opened his eyes he encountered others, that were round and blue and kind. After that, pain and unconsciousness again. And so, alternately, with pain almost unendurable, and unconsciousness the only solace.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter III

WHEN Amos woke out of his dream he was lying on a narrow camp bed. Above his head the white-washed ceiling was quite low. He tried to follow its course with his eyes, but moving his eyes made

his head ache, so he closed them again. Around him there was a sweet silence filled with delicious murmurings; of a kettle singing somewhere on a hob, of a soft breeze sighing through unseen trees, of a bird calling to its mate.

And after a while the soft sound of women whispering to one another:

“What did the doctor say?”

“That he is practically out of danger.”

“All except the head, I suppose?”

“Yes. That’s going to be the trouble.”

“When is he coming again?”

“Not before to-morrow.”

“Have you had a talk with James?”

“Yes.”

“Well?”

“I think it’ll be all right.”

Then there was a shuffling, like soft, low-heeled shoes moving over a carpet, the closing and shutting of a door, and something moving towards him. Once more he opened his eyes.

“Hello! So you’re awake, are you?”

Not an unpleasant voice, though rather hard and practical. It seemed perfectly natural that the next moment he should be looking into a pair of round china-blue eyes. He wanted to know where he was, what all this meant, and tried to ask questions; but the hard, practical voice at once put a stop to these:

“Now don’t worry! Just go to sleep like a good man.”

A firm hand patted his pillow and straightened the blanket under his chin: then the blue eyes receded from his line of vision, and presently he

heard a sound like a casement being opened; sweet-scented air, air that held the fragrance of damp earth and spring flowers, fanned his cheek: the twittering of birds came shrilly to his ear and he fell asleep.

And so alternately he slept, and ate, and suffered. Obediently he did just as he was told, took what was given him, watched with slowly returning consciousness the movements of a young woman, to and fro and in and out of the room. She wore a blue dress, of which only the sleeves and part of the back were visible; the rest of her accoutrement was all white, large white apron with braces over the shoulders, white cap, white cuffs, white stockings, white shoes. Her face was rosy and round, and all around the white cap fluffy golden curls escaped unfettered. Amos noted very particularly that her dress came down well below her knees, and that her shoes had low, square heels.

As he didn't know her name, he called her Blue Eyes to himself.

She didn't pamper him at all, nor did she look tender and pitying when she removed the bandages and applied dressings, which sometimes hurt like fun: but her hands were firm like her tread and like her voice, and very, very gentle; and when she had finished she said in her quiet, practical way: "There now, sorry I hurt you!" He always tried to smile and murmured: "You didn't hurt me one bit." Once she laughed very heartily at this and said: "Liar!" so funnily, that he laughed too, the first time for many a day.

On the whole, Amos came to the conclusion that

he had at last wakened from that long, unpleasant dream. He was more sure than ever that he had been dreaming, because events were in such a hopeless jumble in his brain. They were all there: the night-club, the police, Muriel Lamprière, the man with the note-book lying full length on the ground, the prison cell, the dock, the endless questionings and cross-questionings, the twelve bald-headed, impassive men, the verdict, penal servitude, Dartmoor, the railway journey, the mighty crash—they were all there, inside his brain, but in an inextricable tangle. He tried to remember when they occurred, and in what order. This was most important, because he still thought of writing the epoch-making book, *Amos in Policeland*, which would bring him fame and fortune.

He tried once or twice to talk to Blue Eyes about it. He very much wanted to have her opinion about those events, and also about the book which he meant to write. But whenever he broached the subject, she shut him up, rather rudely once or twice, Amos thought. He concluded that she, too, perhaps was a budding author and was perhaps envious of the splendid theme which he had evolved for his book.

Gradually, however, his mind became more clear; and he was slowly beginning to remember things which he would have given half his life to forget. From that moment he ceased to ask Blue Eyes quite so many questions: he was being allowed to sit up every day now, for an hour or two. Blue Eyes had placed an arm-chair by the window, and the first time that he had sat there,

looking across the trim little lawn, to the copper beech just bursting into leaf and the Forsythia like a golden rain, he realised how much better it would have been if his dream had ended in the last long sleep.

That day, too, Amos remembered when he had first seen Blue Eyes.

It was already a memorable day. The doctor had been; he didn't come very often now, only occasionally. Amos liked him. He was a cheery little man; he would always arrive in a tearing hurry, declaring that he had less than five minutes to spare; then he would stay half an hour; sometimes three-quarters, telling anecdotes which he obviously thought were funny and would cheer the patient up. They were age-old chestnuts, most of them. He would insist on calling Amos Mr. Madoc, which was annoying, but Amos had not sufficient energy to argue the point. That night after the doctor had gone and Blue Eyes had put Amos to bed, he told her about this funny fad of the doctor's.

"Calling me Madoc," he said, "so silly."

And Blue Eyes had retorted very quietly, in her business-like, practical manner:

"It isn't silly. You are going to be Mr. Madoc in future. Lance Madoc, you know."

He was content to leave it at that for the moment, because he was really too tired to argue; but a few days later, feeling wonderfully strong, he had it out with her. She told him about the railway accident.

"Several carriages were completely wrecked," she explained, "including the one you were in."

The engine left the rails going round that sharp curve outside Barminster station and overturned. It dragged practically all the coaches down with it. Only the last two escaped. I was in one of them. The loss of life was appalling. All the gas containers burst and blazed and it was thought that everyone in the wrecked coaches had been killed."

"But," Amos said, "how was it that I——? I mean, how was it that you——?"

"How was it I came to find you?" she asked. "Well! my brother lives down here, you know. This is a suburb of Barminster, and we are not far from the station. My brother heard the crash. He was just starting to come and meet me as he knew I was coming by that train. Of course, he did what he could, and so did I. There were several doctors on the scene, and one or two of the local clergy. It was not a pleasant sight, any of it, I can tell you," she added placidly. "Fortunately it was pitch dark."

She didn't say anything for a minute or two: though her round face had remained serene, it had lost its rosy colour, and the big china-blue eyes were staring, expressionless, into vacancy. Amos was content to lie still and wait. If she didn't tell him all about everything to-day, she would to-morrow. And he seemed to have an interminable amount of time ahead of him now.

"Funny I should have remembered you," Blue Eyes said presently; "I only caught a glimpse of you, you know, at Waterloo. My brother helped me to look for you. No one took any notice of us, fortunately. They all seemed to have their own

affairs to attend to, and the light from the flares was a long way off. There was an electric standard about a hundred yards up the line, and we could just see, but, as I say, I was glad that it was so dark.

"My brother," she went on, "had got his car just alongside the line, and he and I went about the wrecked coaches just like other people, to see if we could help. Then I heard a groan. I called my brother because he had the only electric torch. I saw your head and the two policemen. I remembered seeing you at Waterloo. The two men were dead right enough, but I could see that you were alive. My brother was for getting help and having you moved, but somehow, I thought——"

She had a way of stopping like this, in the midst of what she was saying, completing, as it were, her thought within herself. Amos did not say anything. He had guessed her thoughts, and wondered why they had come to her at all, for she didn't look like one who would allow her emotions to get the better of her.

"James—that's my brother—was determined at first to let the police know that you were here. He is a man, you see, and he thought it was his duty. But I think I have persuaded him now."

"To do what?" Amos couldn't help asking.

"To give you a chance."

She was silent for such a long time after that, that Amos wondered if she meant to say anything more. He, of course, didn't dare speak. For one thing, he didn't know what to say. The prospect which she had opened up before him seemed so dazzling that he didn't dare gaze, mentally, upon

it. He was just strong enough now, physically, to envisage the future. He had done it once or twice lately, but dismissed the vision almost as soon as conjured, for it was of a murkiness, a hopelessness, too terrible to contemplate.

"You see," Blue Eyes said presently, and she spoke very slowly and without any inflection in her quiet, rather hard voice, "I am on my way out to Canada. I am joining my sister out there. She is matron at the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg. I was going to be married here to—to a Mr. Madoc. He was in the train with me, you know. I don't know if you saw him. He brought me papers and magazines at Waterloo and made me get out of your carriage. I don't know if you saw him," she added with a pathetic little catch in her throat.

Amos nodded. He couldn't speak.

"At the last station we stopped at," Blue Eyes went on to say, "I forget which it was, he got out to speak to a friend on the platform. The train began to move out of the station whilst they were still talking and walking up and down. Mr. Madoc jumped into the nearest carriage. It was the one next to the engine. It was burned down to a cinder with everyone in it."

"I am so sorry," Amos murmured, and felt a fool for saying such futile words.

"That's all right," she said quietly, and with her strong, capable hands she smoothed out her apron over her knees. "I was not desperately in love with him, though he was a fine man, and a wonderful engineer. We were going to sail for Canada together directly after our wedding, as he

had quite made up his mind to make a position for himself in Montreal. I don't want to stay on here, so I shall go on to Winnipeg and join my sister; I've got to work to make a living, and I might as well do it out there as here."

This time, although Blue Eyes said nothing for a considerable while, Amos also remained silent, with his gaze fixed on the funny round face with the big blue eyes, so pathetic now with their expressionless, vacant stare. The white, rather podgy hands lay quietly folded over the snow-white apron. There was a quietude, almost, one might say, an indifference, about the girl's attitude which was entirely soothing to Amos's jagged nerves. The house, too, was so still. James, the brother, Amos supposed was busy downstairs doing something or other. Blue Eyes hadn't said anything about him so far, and Amos wondered what kind of a man he was and whether he had a business or a profession. It was strange, anyhow, to think that on the decision of that one man, whom Amos had never consciously seen, rested the whole of his future destiny. In what way Amos didn't know yet. He could not for the life of him have broken this silence which seemed like the precursor of a pronouncement made to him by Fate and transmitted by Blue Eyes.

The window, over at the other end of the room, was open and Amos could hear the patter of steady rain against the frame. Somewhere in the distance a dog barked, and then came the swiftly approaching sound of the rumble of wheels and of a shrill railway whistle, wafted hither upon the wings of the breeze. The bedside light, subdued

by a pale rose-coloured shade, brought into relief the whiteness of the girl's attire. But her head was bent, so that Amos could not now see her face, only the tendrils of her fair hair, which in the rose-hued light appeared like fairy flames.

Strangely enough, he felt no stirrings of heart or senses at the nearness of this girl, who had actually brought the first ray of comfort into his dismal dream. Body and nerves were still too weary for more than a gentle thrill of comprehension and sympathy. The blue eyes, the kindly hands, the even, soothing voice had meant nothing to him beyond the sense of gratitude which a sister's care might arouse.

At sound of the railway whistle a quick shudder had gone through her body. She looked up and gave a short, pleasant laugh:

"Someone is walking over my grave," she said in her matter-of-fact way. "What was I saying?"

"You were speaking about going out to Winnipeg—to your sister," Amos said, and he added slowly: "I have been to Winnipeg."

"Oh, you have, have you?" she said lightly. "Did you like Canada?"

"Very much."

"You wouldn't mind going there again?"

She didn't wait for his reply—God only knew what it would have been—but she went on glibly:

"This is what I thought. When Mr. Madoc got out of the train at Diprose—I remember now it was Diprose—he left his bag in the rack. Then—afterwards, when I collected my things, I took the bag along, too, because, of course, I didn't

know yet—— Well! anyway, in the bag was Mr. Madoc's passport."

Her round blue eyes were now fixed inquiringly upon Amos. She seemed to be making a great effort to get at the back of his mind, to try to read what was going on behind that frown which had appeared between his brows. And suddenly she went on again:

"As I said to James, I don't see why not? Now that your hair and moustache are quite long, you are not really unlike Lance—Mr. Madoc, I mean. And with the same sort of clothes and all that, you can make yourself look exactly like the photograph. They never look much at the photograph. . . . I had a good deal of trouble in persuading James, but it's done now and he won't go back on it. He is a very scientific man, you know. Does experiments, and all that sort of thing. Chemistry. Anti-toxins. You wouldn't understand. Some years ago, before the war I mean, he did a good deal of social work, discharged prisoners and so on, so he couldn't help being sympathetic. But you know what men are, duty to society, and so on. As I say, give a man a chance. And if he doesn't make good, he'll get his punishment in the end right enough."

She came abruptly to a halt in her rambling talk, and then said somewhat lamely:

"Now what do you say?"

Amos couldn't say anything. He could only lie there and gaze at the white-clad figure before him. She seemed suddenly to have been transformed into an angel of light, holding out to him the golden branch of newly awakened hope.

"My sister-in-law is all right," she said, "and now that James has given way, we can go ahead. Of course, the servants never knew. They are only a pair of silly country girls, and they didn't see your clothes, because you were covered with the motor rug when we brought you in, and James and I undressed you and put you to bed. I put those horrid clothes at the bottom of my wardrobe. No one has seen them except James, his wife and me."

"I wonder," Amos said suddenly, "if you realize what an angel you are."

"Don't be silly," she retorted in her practical way, "and instead of talking rubbish, just say if you are willing."

"To go out to Canada?" he asked; "under an assumed name, and with a false passport?"

"Yes!"

"Might as well ask a man if he will go to paradise, after he has had a glimpse of hell fire, it strikes me."

"Then you do agree?" she insisted rather impatiently.

"Of course. But——"

"What's the trouble now?"

"I haven't a silver sixpence."

"I know that, silly, but you won't want much. James'll lend you. He has a lot more money than he knows what to do with. He'll give you some clothes and enough money to get you to Montreal. After that you've got to shift for yourself."

"And what are *you* going to do?" Amos asked, quite convinced that she would be going straight

back to heaven to resume her angelic form, after this incursion into his dream.

"I told you I was going out to my sister in Winnipeg," she said.

"Can't I be your servant—your slave or something? black your shoes or cook for you? My God, you are going to let me do something like that, aren't you?"

"Now you're again talking rubbish. You are going to make good, that's what you are going to do. I know all about you, you know, because I've seen your photo in the *Daily Mirror*. I think you're a young fool, and that there's no real harm in you. James thought the same or he wouldn't have helped you, not if I had asked him ever so. So there! And now you'd better sleep over it, and we'll have another talk to-morrow. James has booked a berth for you provisionally on the *Campania*. She sails on the 18th from Liverpool to Montreal, so you've not got much time to get stronger."

She rose, and in her businesslike way started setting the room tidy for the night, rearranging bottles, shaking up cushions, pushing chairs into place. Amos's glance followed her every movement. She certainly did not answer to the usual human conception of celestial visitants. For one thing, her figure, though young, was certainly not slim, she was short; her feet, in low-heeled, white shoes, were not small. Her features were not ethereal, her expression rather comical than sublime. Her voice was not celestial in its timbre, and her English was not elegant: it suggested a London suburb rather than heaven. Her educa-

tion had obviously been more practical than refined. In fact she embodied almost every defect which in any other woman would have repelled Amos at the outset. Nevertheless she was the nearest approach to an angel he had ever come across, and the very fact that, physically, she did not attract him in the least, enhanced her inner angelic qualities in his sight.

During her tidying activities she came once more quite close to his bedside. Instinctively he put out his hand and caught her by the wrist. She snatched it away, almost roughly.

"Don't be silly," she said in her abrupt way.

"Mayn't I kiss your hand—just once?" Amos pleaded.

"Of course not," she replied. "The idea! You are not a Frenchman, are you?"

"No. But you are an angel."

"Silly!" she retorted with a shrug of the shoulders and started calmly measuring out his medicine.

"Do you know," Amos said after he had obediently swallowed the draught, "that I have not the least idea what your name is?"

"Haven't you?" she said. "My name is Browne."

"I mean your Christian name."

"Lena," she said. "They always make fun of my name, because I never get leaner. It isn't a pretty name, anyway."

"I like the one I have given you much better."

"What's that?"

"Blue Eyes," he said.

She gave a short, rather dry little laugh:

“ Well! you are a softy, aren’t you now? ” she remarked curtly.

Then without so much as giving him a last glance or saying a final good-night, she rearranged his pillow, turned out the light and went quietly out of the room.

BOOK II

And the New

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter I

A MID-APRIL morning on the fringe of the wild. Far away, down below, the awakening prairie lies, fruitful and limitless, stretching out arms ready to embrace the life-giving warmth of the coming day. In the east the sunrise has kindled the orange and crimson petals of innumerable cloud-lets, whilst overhead a belated star has only just blinked its last farewell. To north and westward sweep and swell the billowy crests of the foothills, on which here and there still gleam sun-kissed patches of winter's snow. And high beyond, the granite outposts of the mighty Rockies rise from out the darkness, snow-hooded like the ramparts of some godlike Titan's stronghold.

Peace has risen with the dawn. Nature even appears to have paused in her travail, and living dwellers of these immensities to have held their breath, whilst the silence of infinity descends upon the wild. And through this mighty silence, mysterious sounds come rolling in over miles upon miles of untrodden fastnesses: the clash of ice-floes that come floating down the rivers and meet with a crash as of mammoth swords wielded by giant foes, or the detonating boom of huge masses of snow as they part from their moorings on crags and rock and come tumbling down the mountain-side.

Down in the valley this booming and clanging and rolling of Nature's playthings are soon absorbed in the pleasant din of human life and human activity. The majestic silence which immediately precedes the dawn is quickly broken by those many sounds, the clucking of hens, the lowing of cattle, the yapping of puppies, the creaking of cart-wheels, the whirr of motors, a distant bell, a bark, a growl, the laughter and chatter of men and women at work, which mingling all together, uniting, combining, merging make such a cheerful, such an exhilarating medley.

But these sounds did not even find an echo in the lonely shack on the fringe of the wild. Here peace and silence still lingered hand-in-hand. Only the champing of a bit, the humming of a kettle, and now a soft-toned whistle, vied with the tender sougling of the morning breeze in the bluffs, or the crackling of tiny dead twigs, detached from the parent boughs, betrayed the presence of man! One man! Young, active, sinewed, tall: pipe in mouth, shirt sleeves rolled up to display a fine, well-weathered pair of arms. For the moment he is busy washing up and tidying away the remnants of a luscious breakfast: cocoa, bread, butter, fresh meat and I don't know what else. A good breakfast, which denotes a healthy appetite; a healthy appetite, which denotes serenity of mind. And he whistles the while a tune from "No, No Nanette," old-fashioned now it would be to ultra-modern ears. Now and again he throws a word to, or a glance on, a dog of uncertain pedigree, inclined to favour the Dachs species, who sits on his haunches waiting for the bits that are too

good to throw away. Waiting for something to turn up.

"Well, Mr. Micawber, I think that's about all," his master says, and lifts up the plate which the dog has licked cleaner than any washing could make it. "You'd better not come down to-day. I shall be too busy to look after you."

There is no mistaking the determination in the gentle, pleading eye: "I think I'd better come down, sir, if you don't mind," it says in response.

"You'll be in the way," his master tells him—equally determined. "We are rounding up some of that cattle. You'll get a kick or something."

Mr. Micawber does not argue the point. One eyebrow up, the other down; one ear pricked, the other flopping over his left eye, that's his way of saying: "Well! have it your own way—but I'll bide my time and get mine in the end."

His master bids him good-bye. "Be a good boy," he says, "and leave the chipmunks alone."

Then he has a talk with the pony before he mounts; fondles its ears, pats the shaggy neck, sees that girth and reins are comfortable. Everything is in order in the lonely shack, the bed ready for the night, the soft-melting snow all cleared away: the bag of oats for the pony, the buckets of water from the stream, the piece of yellow sulphur in the drinking trough for Mr. Micawber; and so the lordly owner of the domain can start for the day's work. Down the trail which winds along the side of the mountains and over the foothills to Mr. Crum's ranch below. A matter of six miles. Mr. Micawber left at the shack on guard. At the first bend in the trail, his

master has turned in his saddle to give him a last look. He does not say "Be a good boy!" but the look implies the command, and Mr. Micawber at the moment is looking angelic. One eyebrow lifted to express perfect obedience, one ear pricked as if to hear the last command.

The air is as clear as crystal, the scent of growing things pervades the atmosphere. As the pony picks its way carefully down the trail, snow and ice are quickly left behind—in dells and valleys they have been thawing for days—and the trail becomes soft and muddy, with little puddles horse-shoe-shaped, which seem like so many mirrors each reflecting the glory of the dawn. The bluffs, aspen and birch, on the foothills betray the rising sap in their swelling branches, and the willow, all a-quiver, shakes off with a thrill of joy the last stray leaves of yester year. After the first three miles the descent becomes easy. The rider allows the reins to hang loose over the pony's neck: he pulls his pipe out of his pocket and relights it. Before the trail merges into the road at the foot of the Porcupine Hills, he turns round in his saddle just to have a last look at the muddy trail, and also because from this point there is such a good view of the clump of firs that stands guard over the lonely shack. The man's glance takes in the distant height, dwells on it with a sense of joy, and then follows the direction of the trail down to within a hundred yards or less from the pony's heels. There is a sharp hairpin bend there, with a tall projecting stone half obstructing the trail, and from behind the stone Mr. Micawber emerges, padding along

on his short stumps, perfectly unconcerned as to whether he is wanted or no. He has been padding like this for three miles but does not seem a bit tired; one ear is still pricked, one eyebrow still arched.

His master has reined in the pony, and waited till Mr. Micawber is within earshot, then he speaks in tones of stern command:

"Go back, you villain," he said, "how dare you follow me when I ordered you to stop at home?"

Whereupon Mr. Micawber sits down in the wettest puddle he can find, and with one eye gazes up at his master. There is humour in his glance, even though his attitude is one of complete deference.

"Go back," his master reiterates, very firmly indeed.

Mr. Micawber winks his other eye. Then turns his head round, contemplating Nature. His master urges the pony to make a fresh start. As a rule the last three miles can be done with an easy trot, and the pony in a general way is thankful to be able to stretch her legs, after the slow manner in which she must pick her way down the first part of her journey. But to-day no such good-will seems to animate her: urged by her rider she continues to walk. Animals, dumb silly creatures, in league against Man, their lord. The pony walking so as to enable Mr. Micawber to keep up with her. For Mr. Micawber, as soon as his master's back is turned, has started to pad along again. Another three miles. Out of the question. The short bandy legs would

never stand it. But Mr. Micawber has the obstinacy of the gentle. He has made up his mind that he is not going to be left behind in the shack, and if his master is cruel and equally obstinate and won't give him a lift, well then he'll just pad along on his bandy legs, the whole of the six miles down to Crum's ranch, where something pleasant is sure to turn up by way of compensation.

Well! What can Man, poor soft-hearted creature, do, in view of such obstinacy? Within the next two hundred yards the pony comes to a halt, Mr. Micawber is lifted into the saddle, and tucked up inside his master's coat, where he is safe and comfortable.

"You are an old villain," his master says before he starts again: Mr. Micawber gives him a perfunctory lick on nose and chin, winks one eye, would wag his tail, had there been room for this process, and the pony starts again—now at a comfortable trot—as she feels that overmuch time has already been wasted in this unequal fight between Man's obstinacy and that of a dog.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter II

A STRANGER came riding down the road and turned into the yard in front of Mr. Crum's house.

"Here!" he called to the man who was standing in the doorway of the old barn, absorbed in the

contemplation of three puppies of uncertain pedigree and ravenous appetite who were just finishing their dinner. "Look after the mare, will you, while I go and speak with Mr. Crum?"

The man by the barn took very little notice. He did just look up to see who it was, but the puppies' dinner apparently interested him far more than the stranger and his rather peremptory call. The dogs on the contrary—there were two woolly ones and a smooth one, also one who resembled a Dachshund fairly closely—who had finished their own dinner and had contemplated a direct attack on the puppies' trough, immediately turned their attention to the strangers, weighing for a moment, as it were the pros and cons of leaving the puppies alone in favour of these intruders. They decided that a man and his horse were at least as interesting as puppies: so they raced across the yard—the three of them that is to say, not the Dachs—they jumped, and they growled and they barked, did all the things, in fact, which make dogs objectionable to those who have no use for them.

The stranger was seemingly such an one, for he called: "Down! you brutes," to the dogs, and "Here, keep your beastly dogs out of my way," to the man. Whereupon the Dachs—or so he must be called for want of a more accurate definition—cocked one ear, blinked at his master with one eye, and slowly struggled to his feet as much as to say: "How are we going to deal with this malapert? Beastly dogs, indeed!"

The man now turned his attention from the puppies to the stranger, took the straw out of

his mouth, strolled across the yard, and finally called to the Dachs: "Here, you scamp! tell 'em to stop. Everybody doesn't like their row."

Whereupon the Dachs executed a manoeuvre only understood of dogs, yapped and barked, wagged a pointed tail and fussed about until snapping and growling had ceased and three tails—two of them bushy and one stumpy—wagged in perfect amity. After which—the man being busy with the stranger—the four dogs turned to and ate the rest of the puppies' dinner.

The stranger had watched these manoeuvres with a supercilious eye.

"Intelligent dog that mongrel of yours," he said with marked condescension; "what do you call it?"

"Mr. Micawber," the man replied curtly. Then he added as if in afterthought: "He's a Dachshund."

"Oh! is he?" the stranger retorted with a laugh. "Waiting for his pedigree to turn up, what?"

Pleased with his own wit, he now turned in the direction of the house.

"Mr. Crum is home, ain't he?" he said, and not waiting for a reply—it was apparently his habit not to wait for a reply to his questions—he strode quickly up the wooden steps and crossing the verandah, disappeared into the house.

With this stranger we will have concern later, but have little or none with Mr. Crum, the owner of the handsome brick-built house and of the land adjoining the railroad for a distance of nearly

half a mile. On this land Mr. Crum has for the past six years run a very profitable cattle and horse-breeding ranch. He only interests us so far that he has in his employ a man named Lance Madoc—the man who owns Mr. Micawber, and who has taken possession of an abandoned shack on the fringe of the wild and made of it his summer home, going backwards and forwards, down and up the trail, to and from his work on Mr. Crum's farm. Lance Madoc came to Mr. Crum four months ago—in the depths of the winter that was—in answer to an advertisement in one of the local papers for an experienced stockman, having worked in a garage at Winnipeg previously, and as steward on one of the boats on the Great Lakes before that. But he applied for the job and got it, chiefly because Mr. Crum liked his looks, and also because he seemed willing not only to face a winter on the prairie, but to put his hand to anything and make himself generally useful. He turned out to be a good man, too. Excellent with the stock and not full of fancies and pretensions as men from those Old Countries so often were. And he certainly was the best man with a horse this side of Calgary: or on a horse for a matter of that. By George! the man could ride—he could ride anything and make it go, too—a cow if you liked—or a bull if you dared him to—a bit mad, of course—most Englishmen were a bit barmy. Some of the men said that Lance Madoc must have been a gentleman once—learned the ways of a gentleman, anyway, up in the Old Country—fastidious about his finger-nails and

his pocket handkerchiefs—well! well! he'd get over that presently. And he was worth humouring because he was so good with the stock—and with a horse— By George! the tumbles he had—some people said he had a loose seat—but not a bit of it—it was only that he was daring. Such tumbles! Mr. Crum prophesied that he would break his neck one day, as sure as sure: the things he would do on a horse or with a horse! no one ever saw the like.

As for dogs—it was positively uncanny—talk to them he would—by the hour—and that mongrel of his—Mr. Micawber he called it—it was the rummiest thing! He had brought the creature over from his last place in Winnipeg, had Madoc. Buttoned up inside his coat. And the thing could do anything except talk. It would sit for hours just watching Lance, with one eyebrow up and the other down, one ear cocked and the other flopping over its eye, and an expression . . . ? just as if it was waiting for something wonderful to turn up.

Well! that was Lance Madoc and his dog, and his shaggy pony, Emma, and all the four-footed and two-footed and furred and feathered creatures which he collected about him. At one time he brought a tiny bob-cat down from somewhere in the mountains, fed it and petted it and kept it about the place until the maids were sick of it, for it was dirty in its habits and rather terrifying in the way it would squat in any recess it could find and from thence growl ominously at anyone who went by. The maids bribed one of the men to shoot the damned thing. And, my Lord! what

a row there was! Madoc went on like a lunatic, and in the end it amounted to this that Pete—the boy who had shot the bob-cat—had to leave, because Madoc gave him such a thrashing that Pete couldn't forgive him, although Madoc was the first to offer to shake hands. But the two never would have become friends again: there would always have been enmity between them, which is an intolerable situation in a land where companionship between those who work on the same ranch is bound to be a close one.

Mr. Crum took Lance to task about the whole thing:

"A wild, beastly thing," he said. "And all that fuss because Pete killed it, to please the women."

"Francis had done Pete no harm," Madoc retorted rather sullenly—Francis being the name of the deceased bob-cat.

"You leave them wild things alone, young man," Mr. Crum went on quite kindly, "or they'll do for you one o' these days. You remember that bear you would insist on having truck with, although I told you——"

"It was hungry, poor thing—it followed Emma just like a dog."

"And nearly made one bite of your dog, didn't he?"

"Maybe, maybe," Lance retorted, and he also said: "I guess so," for Lance Madoc had picked up the vernacular of the New World with astonishing rapidity, and "guessed," "calculated" and "reckoned" and "may-be'd" after two years with any of them.

"But I'll tell you one thing," he often said when he was chaffed about his dumb friends, "those creatures, big and little, will never let you down; they'll never round on you or jaw your head off. Mischief? Lord, yes! but spite? not on your life. Ask Mr. Micawber, he knows."

*Blue Eyes and Grey**Chapter III*

MR. CRUM and the stranger had come out of the house and were standing at the corner of the verandah, from whence they could see the whole stretch of country spread out eastwards to one side and south to the other. Like a gigantic map, it was coloured brown with the furrowed earth and green with the young spring shoots, and dotted here and there with distant homesteads, coquetting behind bluffs of firs or aspen, a well here and there, or lines of fencing, till the whole melted into the distance, the blue and silver haze of the low-lying horizon. Close by, a hundred yards or so from the east side of the house, the road stretched its dun-coloured ribbon, parallel with the railway track, whose blue and purple lines converged and melted northwards into the haze.

The stranger was taking his leave, business being obviously satisfactory, for Mr. Crum had just said: "Cigar?" and it was a known fact that he only offered cigars when he had done a satisfactory deal over a horse or cattle.

"No, thanks," the stranger replied. "I don't smoke 'em." He took out his cigarette case, an expensive-looking one, and offered it to Mr. Crum, who waved it aside contemptuously.

"No cigarette-smoking for me, thank you, Mr. Horfman," he said. "I've never taken to it myself."

Down in the yard Lance Madoc was standing beside the horse over which the satisfactory deal had just been concluded.

"Well! I'll be going now, Mr. Crum," the stranger said. "You are sure you don't mind me having your Tin Lizzie till to-morrow?"

"Why, no! I'd rather you had her," he went on with a genial laugh, "than the mare."

Then he called down to Madoc: "Say, Madoc, take the mare round to No. 5, and get the two-seater out for Mr. Horfman, will you?"

But he had to call down again, and even then Lance didn't seem to hear. He was staring 'way away up the road where a fast-moving vehicle had just come into sight. No more than a black speck as yet to an untrained eye, but drawing rapidly nearer.

"What the devil are you staring at, man?" Mr. Crum asked.

"That fine bay, sir."

Mr. Crum and the stranger turned to look in the same direction. They had to screw up their eyes to see, for the sun on the steel rails and the lines of Hercules fencing had become dazzling. Mr. Crum took up the field-glasses which he always carried slung over his shoulder.

"Well!" he said after a moment's examination of the approaching vehicle, "it's coming along fine."

"Much too fine, I'm thinking. Nearly as fast as that Tin Lizzie behind it."

"You're right. The man shouldn't let it have its head like that."

Mr. Crum offered the glasses to the stranger.

"No, thanks," the latter said, "I guess it's Mrs. van Menterghem in her old-fashioned *calèche*."

"The new people over at Bootham?"

"Yes. Don't you know them?"

"I just know the old man in the way of business: meeting him at Macleod and so on. I've never seen the wife."

"They've only been married a year."

"So I understand. And they say she was badly hurt in a motor accident during the honeymoon."

"That's so."

"A bit of bad luck."

"She won't get into a motor now if she can help it."

"Oh, then," Mr. Crum said, "that's why she goes about in that *calèche*. I've often wondered——"

The *calèche* was easily distinguishable now, though still far away. The bay looked fresh, high-spirited, with the metal on her harness sparkling in the sun. The air was so clear that even at this distance the two men could see that it was an old man who was driving, and that two ladies were sitting in the carriage.

"I saw them drive past here three or four days ago," Mr. Crum said, "with a couple of grips on the front seat."

"That's right. Mrs. van Menterghem went up to visit the Tommers."

"I wondered how it was they were driving so far from home."

Down in the yard Lance Madoc's grip on the mare's bridle had tightened instinctively.

"If that man doesn't look out, there will be a spill presently," Mr. Crum remarked sententiously.

"Well! so long as it is only a spill——" the stranger retorted with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Not much harm," said Mr. Crum, "except for the lady with the nerves."

"That's so— Well! I'll have to be going."

The two men shook hands.

"S'long, Mr. Horfman," said Mr. Crum. "Call again when you've heard from Halifax— Mind, I like the mare and I'll always give you good value if——"

Mr. Crum paused suddenly, his eyes fixed on the distance, 'way behind the *calèche*, where at a sharp bend in road and track a tiny puff of smoke had become visible.

"By God!" he said, "if that's not the 10.15 from——"

A distant throbbing, snorting, pounding made itself heard above the sounds immediately about and around the farm.

"That's what's upset the bay, you may be sure," Mr. Horfman declared.

"So long as the man hasn't lost control . . ."

Mr. Crum remarked. And Mr. Horfman called out to Madoc:

"Get hold of the mare, young man? She don't like express trains either, much."

And now a shrill whistle, distant still, but prolonged and strident.

"By George!— He's off——"

"Who?"

"The bay, I tell you——"

And sure enough, the bay, still half a mile away up the road, had, at sound of the whistle, bounded and reared and now was really off, breaking into a gallop, ears back, bit between the teeth, tearing along, and dragging the *calèche* after it, as if it were a bale of straw. The road was good—fairly smooth in fact—but there were a few holes—a few loose stones—and over these the wheels of the light carriage went bumping and swaying, while the bay's hoofs thundered along at tin Lizzie express speed. Or nearly so. Not another vehicle in sight, but, still some way behind, the black speck, puffing and snorting, getting bigger and bigger every moment, and once again emitting a shrill whistle. Another minute and the 10.15, pounding along at thirty miles an hour, would be turning the bay's nervousness to frenzy. One or two of Mr. Crum's men have come running across the yard, others are vaulting the fence and running up the road to try to meet the *calèche* before it overturns.

"Get the car out, one of you, quick!"

"My good sir—what can you do?—It'll be all over before you——"

"Here! Hey! what's that fellow doing? Don't let him——"

For Madoc now was on the mare's back, and galloping with her as fast as he could tear, to meet the bay, the *calèche* and the 10.15.

"He'd no right to— That mare—worth two hundred guineas if she's worth a penny . . ."

"Well! she's my mare now, ain't she?" says Mr. Crum, "and she'll be all right with Madoc."

"She won't be all right," retorts Mr. Horfman, who knows well enough that until the purchase money has changed hands, anything may happen to upset the deal. "You shouldn't keep a man who——"

"I tell you Madoc is all right——"

Lance Madoc, sure enough, is riding like the devil, his nose nearly touching the mare's neck: his knees at any angle you please, his elbows all over the place. Such riding! More like a jockey than——

"Great God! He'll break his legs!"

"Not he!" says Mr. Crum.

"He was off before I could say knife. Why didn't you——"

"He's all right, I tell you."

"But the mare?"

"Damn the mare!" says Mr. Crum, and strides clattering down the verandah steps to where one of his men is hastily getting the small car out of the garage.

Half a dozen men are now scattered about the road: a couple of them running hard and Lance Madoc two hundred yards away riding like the devil: farther away the bay coming along at full

speed—away from that row—away from that noisy foe in the rear, with the *calèche* swaying behind like a bale of straw, now to the right, now to the left, bumping against the edge of the permanent way one moment, and the next nearly turning over against a heap of stones by the roadside: a swaying, irresponsible thing, holding two women who cling, silent, numbed with terror, eyes staring, mouths set in a stillborn cry of horror, to the cushions, the straps, anything; and on the box an old man whose strength has long since fled to the winds. And less than half a mile farther still, the 10.15 thundering along.

The crash, of course, is inevitable unless the engine driver or mechanic has seen the whole thing and understood the situation in time to put the brakes on. In less than sixty seconds the bay and the *calèche* will be nothing but mincemeat, and Lance Madoc and the mare, mincemeat with them. For what can that fool Lance do? divert the bay? seize hold of the reins? turn her against the fence? Not he! There's no time for that. The 10.15 would be on them all before. . . . One of those cinema stars might do it, like Fairbanks or Tom Mix, but not that fool Lance—There'll be a worse crash in a minute when he tries to—

“Now what the dickens——?”

This from Mr. Horfman, who, left standing on the verandah, is necessarily playing a waiting game. Mr. Crum has got the small car going and is hurrying to the scene of the coming disaster.

“What the dickens——?” Mr. Crum in his car murmurs also to himself, for Madoc, far

from attempting to interfere with the bay, has turned the mare on to the permanent way, allowed the *calèche* to rattle by, then back he is on the road and waving, waving a handkerchief, waving his arms, clinging to the saddle with his knees, waving again before the mare, brought to a sudden halt, shakes him off her back and sends him flying, smash against the Hercules fencing, still clinging to the reins. Up again within a second or two, like an india-rubber doll, and still waving one arm whilst the other is round the mare's neck.

"All right, old girl. We are all right, you and I. Those fellows on the engine have seen us. Never mind about that silly bay and the *calèche*. So long as you and I are all right."

He looks a sight. Blood streaming down his face and from his hand. And hot! His shirt sticking to his lean shoulders. No collar, of course, and his trousers ripped at the knees. Luckily no one takes any notice of him. The 10.15 is now at a standstill some 200 yards further up, and the passengers come climbing down from the observation car to see what's happened. The crowd collects round the *calèche* and the streaming, quivering bay. No one takes much notice of Lance and the mare, which is lucky, as he has all his work cut out in quieting her and telling her what a brave, clever girl she really was.

"We'll go round by that meadow, old girl," he tells her, "so's nobody shall see us. And you shall have a nice rub down and be quite comfortable before you're wanted again."

He leads the mare along and through a gate into the meadow. He wouldn't bother about the crowd and the *calèche* at all, except for wondering if the women were all right and the bay unhurt.

Half an hour later he is clean and tidy again: one of the maids has tied a handkerchief round his bleeding skull, and with his hat on, this doesn't show at all. The mare is as quiet and docile as you like. So quiet that she does not even heed the dogs, who think it is their business to add to the din and bustle about the house.

"Here, Madoc! Ma-a-a-doc! Where are you? Oh! There you are. Gov'nor wants you."

"Look after the mare, then."

"Right you are."

Mr. Crum, standing in front of his house, was calling to Lance.

"I say, Madoc, will you drive the ladies home?"

"Yes, sir."

"A bit of luck you had, catching the engine-driver's eye: hadn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Another minute and——"

"Yes, sir."

"The mare all right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good. See that Mrs. van Menterghem's horse is all right, too, and that there's nothing broken in the carriage. Then put the horse to, and wait for the ladies, will you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know Bootham's ranch?"

"Yes, sir."

"Right you are. And get back as soon as you can. It is not more than fifteen miles and they may lend you a bicycle."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Crum paused a moment. Puffed away at his cigar, before he added casually:

"You're not hurt, are you, Madoc?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"Good! Then hurry up, there's a good chap."

Lance Madoc would have liked to ask if the ladies were all right, but he had never been one for asking questions, and after all a runaway horse, an averted accident, were all in the day's work over here. As the ladies were driving home they couldn't be feeling very badly. He heard later that after the 10.15 had come to a standstill, not a hundred yards behind the *calèche*, the bay continued her mad career for a while until Mr. Crum turned his car across the width of the road. The poor beast would probably then have crashed into the car, for he was blind with terror, but fortunately two farm men had in the meanwhile come running up to the spot and had succeeded between them in seizing the bridle and bringing the bay to a standstill, quivering and swaying like a leaf in the wind. Mrs. van Menterghem had fainted and was subsequently brought into the house, but neither the nurse nor the driver was much hurt. Needless to say, however, that Mrs. van Menterghem would not trust herself again to the same old coachman, and Mr. Crum kindly offered one of his men for the job.

"An excellent fellow with horses," he said.

"He'll get you home safely, Mrs. van Menterghem. You needn't worry."

"I won't worry, Mr. Crum, if you say it is all right. Will we, Nurse?"

It seems that Nurse did worry a little about the young man who had helped to stop the train and so saved their lives. She wanted to see him, and she was quite sure Mrs. van Menterghem would wish to——"

"Oh!" said Mr. Crum, "don't you worry about that, Miss. Any of my men would have done the same thing, if they'd got the chance. Lance, he happened to be standing near Mr. Horfman's mare, and he's a very good fellow with a horse, I must say——"

"Lance?" Nurse inquired, frowning a little.

"Lance Madoc," said Mr. Crum. "Such a good fellow with a horse. He'll drive you home. Don't you worry."

"Lance Madoc, did you say?"

"Yes. Lance Madoc."

"Oh!" Nurse said with a funny little inflexion in her voice.

And when presently Mrs. van Menterghem, still feeling rather shaky, and not being, therefore, keenly observant, was safely stowed and packed in her carriage, Nurse, bringing up the rear with cushions, shawls and footstools, looked up at Lance Madoc, who was sitting on the box with the old coachman beside him.

"Funny it should have been you," she said with her placid smile.

MR. CRUM had spoken of Bootham as being about fifteen miles distant from his own farm. It was more like eighteen. A two-hours' drive with the bay still rather restive and ready for mischief. Lance Madoc had to keep his wits about him, and not allow him to have his own way for one minute. This with his cut head and bleeding hands was rather trying, especially as by noonday the sun got quite hot. The only comfort was that there was no dust. Lance, who had acquired a philosophic turn of mind, kept saying to himself at intervals: "Lucky there's no dust! Lucky there's no dust!" until he had succeeded in persuading himself that things were not really so bad as they seemed.

Later on, when Mrs. van Menterghem, safely put to bed and not much worse for her adventure, wished to know how the young man fared, "who saved our lives, my dear," Nurse volunteered to go and see how he was getting on and found him sitting in the kitchen, with an untasted dish of cold beef and pickles beside him, his elbow on the table, his sore head clumsily swathed in a stained handkerchief, resting against his equally sore hand.

"Hallo!" he said rather feebly, when she came into the room. He also tried to smile and to rise, for he was genuinely glad to see her, but the effort proved too much, and she in her practical business-like way at once ordered him to sit still.

"And don't move till I come back," she added peremptorily.

Off she went and returned a few minutes later armed with bottles, plaster and bandages. Lance let her do just what she liked with him, as he had done two years ago, after the railway accident. Her firm, capable hands busied themselves about his head, removed the stained handkerchief, washed, dressed, applied antiseptics, plasters, bandages, and finally gave him a reassuring little pat:

"There now, you'll be all right. Sorry I hurt you."

Madoc sat with eyes closed. Two years! Was it really two years since she had patched up his body with those same capable hands and his nerves with that same even, unemotional voice? They seemed to be falling from him, those two years, and he saw himself once more in that room with the low white ceiling and the open casement through which came the scent of wet earth and of spring bulbs bursting into bloom.

"Well!" the quiet, practical voice broke in on his day-dream, "how do you like your new job?"

So like Blue Eyes! Never asked if he was sick or tired or hungry. Lance Madoc opened his eyes and rested them for a moment with a sense of satisfaction upon the familiar figure in immaculate white with only bits of her blue dress showing here and there.

Two years since first he saw her! She had not changed, not one bit. She was just as practical, as placid, just—to him—as sexless as she had always been. He tried to show her that he, too, had become practical and unemotional in this new land where what a man does is all that counts, and what

he feels should be kept within the innermost receptacle of his soul.

"Oh!" he said casually, "of course, it suits me better. I like the beasts and things."

"Better than tyres and spare parts?"

"I get plenty of riding," he said.

"Yes! I suppose you do." She actually smiled that time, and her voice softened ever so little as she said: "Luckily for Mrs. van Menterghem and me."

Of course, one was not going to take any notice of hints of that sort. Fancy talking of anything he may have done for her! and at the time he hadn't even an idea that Blue Eyes was in the *calèche* and in danger of her life. But here was sentiment already rearing its silly head and creeping insidiously into the conversation. Never in all the world——

"Tell me how you are getting on?" he said abruptly.

"Oh! very well!"

"When did you come here?"

"About a month ago."

"Well, you are the rummiest thing——!"

"Why rummy?"

"Because it is not so very long ago—November to be accurate—you remember I went over to tell you that the garage people wanted me to stay the winter at any rate with them——?"

"Well?"

"I said that I had half a mind to stay on and you said——"

"I said, you said, he or she said—what?"

"You said that nothing would induce you to

leave the hospital, or your sister, or Winnipeg."

"What's that got to do with it? You changed your mind and took on the job on Crum's farm, and I answered an advertisement of Mr. van Menterghem for a nurse-companion for his wife. I don't see that it's any business of yours if I change my mind twenty times a day."

"Certainly not. All I said was that you were a rummy thing."

She rose, and in her quiet, methodical way, began setting in order the things which she had used for dressings. So practical! so silent! Lance couldn't help smiling as he watched her collecting her plasters, bandages and things. And now she was once more beside him with a lovely cup of hot coffee which she had brewed heaven only knew how and when, and some nice bread and butter. So different from the cold beef and pickles provided by a kindly kitchen maid; but even if it had been hopelessly unpalatable, Lance would have swallowed it, as he used to swallow the nasty medicines she gave him two years ago.

Two years! Somehow they had fallen away from him just for the moment. He had, of course, seen Blue Eyes—at times quite often—during those two years, but to-day she seemed much more like what she had originally been over in England. It must have been her nursing, her dressing of his wounds, which brought everything—everything—back so vividly.

He drank his coffee and ate the bread and butter in silence, while she watched him, as she used to do, equally silent, with her firm, capable hands primly clasped over her snow-white apron.

"I wish I had known sooner," he said, when he had finished, "that you were only eighteen miles away from Crum's farm."

"Why?" she asked as if she did not know.

"The winter made one feel rather lonely sometimes. Why didn't you let me know?"

"I was going to. And then suddenly Mrs. van Menterghem made up her mind that she would go to Victoria for the winter, so we all went. We've only been back a week."

"Are they nice?"

"The van Menterghems you mean? Yes, she is nice, and so is the daughter. I don't see much of Mr., but the boy is an out-and-out rotter."

"Daughter pretty?"

"Very. She and the boy are children of a former marriage. Mrs. van Menterghem was only married last year to her present husband."

"And she's an invalid?"

"Not exactly. Her nerves went to pieces after a nasty motor accident, and neither her daughter nor her husband could do anything with her, so they advertised for a nurse. I get on all right with her."

"You would!"

"She won't look at a motor, so we go padding along in that old *calèche*. To-day's adventure won't help matters though: and her Dutch husband won't make things any better either. He means all right, but he is dull and heavy and thinks and talks of nothing but business. I never can think why a woman, who is a widow and has plenty of money and a daughter for company, should want to marry again."

"Your Mrs. van What's-her-name may have fallen in love with the Dutchman."

She shrugged her shoulders as if such follies were past her comprehension.

Lance couldn't help laughing. She looked so placid, so neat and trim, so thoroughly unemotional and capable with her tidy cap and apron, her stiff cuffs and practical shoes.

"Why do you laugh?" she asked.

"Because you are the rummiest thing I've ever struck," he said. "I believe that you look upon anything that is not thoroughly matter-of-fact and practical as a mortal sin, and that people to you are just so much machinery. You patch 'em up and put 'em right and tidy when they're out of gear, but as for— Do tell me, Blue Eyes, have you ever cared for anybody—much?"

She didn't reply. Only gave him one curious, cool glance which rather puzzled him for the moment. Was she offended? It certainly had been an impertinent question, and he suddenly remembered the young man on the platform with an armful of magazines—the young man whose name he was bearing now, whose tragic death had enabled Blue Eyes to give him this chance of making good. At the time she hadn't seemed to care very much for the real Lance Madoc, but perhaps she had—more than she cared to admit. Somehow the idea of Blue Eyes caring—in that way—struck Lance as ludicrous. He would have laughed again if he'd dared. But he had always stood a little bit in awe of her, she had a way of freezing any chaff or familiarity, and Lance had decided long ago that she had absolutely

no sense of humour. But he wouldn't have hurt her feelings for worlds.

"I say, you are not offended, are you?" he asked.

She had put away the tea-things—still without saying a word—and was busying herself now with making up the bandages and bottle of anti-septic into a neat parcel. But at Lance's contrite question, she turned her serene blue eyes upon him.

"Offended?" she asked, "why should I be offended?"

"It was caddish of me asking you that."

"Oh!" she said quietly, "that's all right. I didn't pay any attention. But come along now, Mr. van Menterghem must be in and wanting to see you."

"Mr.— Great Lord— What for?"

"Well! he'll want to say something nice to you—naturally—Dutch people are very polite."

"But I haven't done anything."

It was Blue Eyes' turn to laugh now, he looked so distressed.

"No, I know," she said, "but you did drive us home, didn't you? which you need not have done."

"And I suppose your Mr. What's-his-name will want to give me a tip. I'm great on tips, you know. I learned the way to take 'em that time I served as a steward on board the boat on the Lakes. I did do well that time. I think I shall take it on again next summer."

"That's all right," Blue Eyes said placidly. "Tip or no tip, you can't sneak out of this place without seeing Mr. van Menterghem, who said

particularly that he wished to see you, and as you've got an eighteen-mile bicycle ride in front of you, the sooner you start the better."

"Right you are," Lance said with a sigh.

He followed her out of the kitchen and across the hall and vestibule. She pushed open a door.

"Wait in there," she said, "I'll find Mr. van Menterghem for you."

Lance Madoc stepped into the room, and Blue Eyes closed the door behind him. The room was bright and prettily furnished and essentially home-like, so different from the utilitarian appointments of Mr. Crum's house. A cheerful log fire was blazing on the hearth. Close by there was a comfy-looking sofa, loaded with cushions, which, with the table beside it, on which were a bottle of medicine and a small glass, a couple of novels and a heap of papers and magazines, at once suggested the pampered invalid. Facing the door there was a large bay-window with a low seat running round it; and in the bay a large writing-table, littered with pretty things and paraphernalia. A woman was sitting at the table, writing, with her back to the rest of the room. She did not turn to see who had come into the room. The chair in which she sat had a very high back and arms, and all that Lance Madoc could see of her was the one elbow which rested on the table, and the back of her shingled head bent over her writing and with hair the colour of ripe corn.

Through the window of the bay appeared, framed in by the woodwork, an exquisite picture of an early spring garden, with clumps of purple aubretia and silver and gold alyssum clothing a

low stone wall, and tiny crimson shoots of peonies peeping coquettishly through a tangle of early Lent lilies. A border of crocuses flaunted their vivid robes against a border of dark-leaved evergreens, whilst on the luscious carpet of the lawn specimen cedars and maples kept guard over clumps of blue scyllas and starry aconites.

Above and beyond the line of ornamental trees that marked the edge of the garden, the rolling foot-hills rose tier upon tier to the majestic Rockies beyond, crested with cedars and pines and willows, and gaunt dead firs that reared pathetic, naked arms to the azure of the sky. The noonday air was as clear as crystal; the dome above of a vivid blue; the snow-clad heights far away glistened like the magic walls of translucent castles wherein Titans dwell. One of the casement windows was open, and as Lance Madoc stood for a moment quite still, enraptured by the exquisite vista before him, a skylark rose from a field close by: up and up it went, and the air was so clear that Lance could see the flutter of its wings and even the throbbing of the tiny feathers round the throat, as it sent its wonderful pæon of joy and praise to the glory of the Maker of this marvellous day.

Lance loved all birds and beasts, but above all he loved a skylark in the spring.

"You dear thing," he called out involuntarily.

At sound of his voice, the woman at the desk turned and looked at him.

"F—F—F——"

Lance's lower jaw was working as if he had ague. He could not have uttered the name if his life had depended up it; the very sound of it would

have choked him. As it was, he thought that he must either utter a meaningless yell or else fall down—down—down into that black abyss that had suddenly yawned at his feet. Fay Mazeline had slowly risen: she put down her pen and stood there, absolutely still, with one hand resting on the table—perhaps to steady herself. She was looking at him, with a slight frown between those straight brows of hers, which long, long ago he had once kissed. She had changed since then—not much—but she had changed. For one thing the cut hair gave her a quaint, unfamiliar look, and then—well! she had always been such a merry little thing—laughing, smiling, chaffing; now there was just an elusive look of sadness about her mouth. And the eyes, the same grey eyes that had once such tender glances in them—when they met his—when he whispered silly nonsense in her ears—the sort of silly nonsense he would never talk again—the eyes had changed more than anything about her. And yet she was Fay right enough—Fay who had been his two years ago—the grey eyes, the mouth, the corn-coloured hair, they were Fay's right enough, and he was no longer Lance Madoc. He was Amos Beyvin once more: Amos who had kissed that mouth in the secluded corner of the lounge at Château Frontenac; Amos who had looked into those eyes and begged her, entreated her not to forget him; Amos who had stood beside her on the bridge of Shed 18 and with her glanced up at the evening sky, suffused with Northern Lights, through which the golden moon looked down on this land which was her home. Amos Beyvin—my God!—who had proved fickle and

false to her—Amos the prisoner in the dock—the condemned convict—the shamed outcast!

She knew it—the first glance had told him that—she knew everything; the disgrace, the shame, the ineradicable shame—she had believed him dead—and now was perhaps wishing that she had never seen him again. How she must have hated him! how she must have despised him! How she must hate and despise him now!

Instinctively he put up his hands and hid his face behind them. What happened in the next few seconds he did not know. The world appeared to him to be at a standstill while he stood shamed, broken-hearted, silent before her. The next moment there came the sound of heavy steps crossing the hall, the opening and shutting of the door. The spell was broken. Lance's hands fell from before his face. He was Lance Madoc once more. No longer Amos Beyvin. In that one brief minute of wonderful joy and unutterable despair Amos Beyvin had been reborn only to be buried again.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter V

"WELL! You seem to have been a plucky lad. Let's have a look at you."

Fay had gone and the spell was broken. Lance looked up to see a short, stout, florid man before him: a man with a bald head over which a few strands of dark hair had been carefully disposed. A round, flat face, small pleasant eyes, an odour

of stale tobacco, a waistcoat left open to allow the display of a wide expanse of khaki-coloured shirt, a general air of joviality, a hearty laugh and a foreign accent, made up the sum-total of Mr. van Menterghem's personality.

He was carrying a tray on which stood a decanter, a syphon and a couple of glasses, one of them half full, and this he placed upon the table in the bay.

"You've scared Fay away," he said. "Funny girl, she is." Then he added hospitably: "Say when."

Lance shook his head: "Thank you, sir, but I shall have to be going."

"That's all right, but you must have a drink first. Hang it all, Mr. Crum ain't in such a hurry to have you back. I'll send you back in the two-seater with one of my men presently. You don't look fit for a long bicycle ride in the sun."

He poured out a stiff whisky and soda, then quite jovially but firmly he forced Lance Madoc down into a capacious arm-chair, thrust the glass into his hand and said gaily:

"You ain't come from a dry country, anyway, my lad—and unless you're a teetotaler you'll feel all the better for a drink. Have a cigar?"

Lance shook his head.

"Then smoke your pipe if you like."

"You are very kind, sir," Lance said.

He was really rather too tired to argue and Mr. van Menterghem was extraordinarily kind. It would have been churlish to resist. And Lance did not really relish the idea of a long bicycle ride just yet—— if it had been Emma now—she was

so understanding, so gentle—but a bicycle! And Mr. van Menterghem went on talking. Lance put in a word here and there: “Yes” or “No” or “Sure!” He hardly knew what the pleasant Dutchman was saying. He longed to ask him how he happened to know Fay Mazeline, and how long a visit she was paying him. But he didn’t like to ask. His eyes had fastened on a framed photograph which stood on the writing-table. Mrs. Mazeline and Fay together. He knew the photo well: as a matter of fact he had possessed a duplicate of it before——

“You must be feeling sick, young feller,” Mr. van Menterghem said suddenly, “you’re not listening to what I say.”

Lance pulled himself together.

“I must apologise, sir,” he said; “I was only wondering——”

“What?”

“Those two ladies on that photograph——”

“My wife and step-daughter.”

“Your—st—your——”

“My wife’s first husband was a Mr. Mazeline from Quebec. You didn’t know them, did you?”

“I think—I am not sure——”

Lance felt a fool. He wished to God he had not asked. He would much rather not have known. Fay here! Not eighteen miles away from Crum’s! Emma would do it in a couple of hours if put to it. Fay so near!

“Well! It’s my wife’s life you saved so pluckily, my lad,” Mr. van Menterghem went on in his jovial way. “So you’ll have to know the family now, if you didn’t know them before. Fay!

she's a funny girl, but as good as gold and fond of her mother and all that, but Tom—that is my stepson—ever know him?"

"No," Lance was able to say quite easily, because as a matter of fact he had never met Tom Mazeline, who was still at school when he, Lance, came on a visit to Canada.

"He's a headstrong lad," Mr. van Menterghem said with a dejected shake of the head. "I can't do anything with him—that's why I thought—Look here, my lad," he said, as if he had suddenly made up his mind not to beat about the bush any longer. "I like you, that's a fact. You did a damn plucky thing this morning, that's another, and I owe you one, which is a third. Now tell me, are you satisfied with your job up at Crum's?"

"Why, yes, sir," Lance replied. "I am satisfied as far as that goes."

"You wouldn't like to better yourself?"

"That depends—Mr. Crum has been very kind to me. I wouldn't like to leave him in the lurch."

"Not if I offered you ten dollars a week more than he is giving you? Same work—help me look after the farm, the stock, the horses. Then I do a bit of banking. I sell things on commission. I want a man whom I can trust— Now then, what do you say?—Five hundred dollars a month the first year. Eight hundred the next——"

"With the lambing going on," Lance said, "I couldn't leave Mr. Crum in the lurch."

"That's all right, my lad; and I like you all the better for that: but I can make it all right with Mr. Crum."

"How?"

"I can let him have a man I've got here, who's had ten times the experience you have had with stock-breeding. Mr. Crum would give his eyes for him. I couldn't spare him before, but now I don't really want him because I've practically given up rearing. My banking business pays me better, and I only run a small farm. Well! what do you say?"

"I must see what Mr. Crum says."

"So you shall, but you must let me talk with him first."

Lance felt doubtful, and implied as much with a shrug of the shoulders. He wondered what lay behind this man's generous offer. After all, they were complete strangers to one another. Mr. van Menterghem saw the doubt and became more insistent.

"Listen to me, my lad," he said. "I'd best tell you what I have in my mind. This stepson of mine, Tom Mazeline, he is a worry to me, to his mother and to his sister. He does not run straight and that's about it. But there's no harm in the boy—only weak, you understand—weak. Of course, I have no influence with him—stepfather and all that—neither of the young 'uns liked their mother marrying again: Tom, he was just crazy over it—he hasn't forgiven me yet— Well! I've done my best, but he'll never like me—resents my interference, as he calls it—his mother is an invalid and terribly weak where Tom's concerned. Up to now there's been Fay—but——"

"Up to now?" Lance echoed, vaguely wondering what kind of a blow was about to descend on

him—Fay going away? When he had only just found her? Or—or what?

But Mr. van Menterghem was unconscious of the fact that he was actually wielding the instrument that would strike straight and mercilessly at Lance's soul. He went on quietly droning away, all his joviality gone: a frown of anxiety and worry upon his fat round face.

"Fay, she did have a bit of influence over the boy," he said; "he's fond of her in his way, fonder, I think, than he is of his mother. But there it is——"

What? what? why didn't the man speak?

"You see, once she's married——"

Married? That was it. Lance had guessed it all along. He knew this was coming—and yet he was not prepared: he felt like a man who had been knocked on the head with a sandbag. Stunned. Bewildered. Unable to gather his wits together again. It was quite mechanically that he spoke.

"Married, did you say?"

"Well! I suppose it will come to that. She hasn't actually refused him——"

"Refused whom?"

"Mr. Oskar Horfman," Mr. van Menterghem said, naming the man quite casually, just as if he were an ordinary human being, and not a fiend, a devil, who dared to filch Fay, his, Lance's own Fay, who was his—his— No! not his—because, like a criminal fool, he had turned from her, but Fay for all that—the one and only Fay in this miserable world——

Mr. Oskar Horfman?

Lance remembered him. All of a sudden he

remembered him; the man who had turned this morning into Mr. Crum's yard and sold Mr. Crum the mare. Lance saw him as clearly as if he stood in front of him. Small black moustache, smooth black hair, brushed back and plastered down, a scar across the left cheek, smart riding-breeches, well-cut clothes, diamond ring, high collar, riding crop, expensive cigarette case, peremptory voice, Teutonic accent. It was all there. Lance saw and heard it all. The dogs barking. "Keep your beastly dogs out of my way!" "Intelligent dog, that mongrel of yours." Of course, a personality made of such elements was not to be thought of in connection with Fay. That marriage was not going to take place. Not on your life!

Mr. van Menterghem went droning on:

"Plenty of money, you know—smart man of business and smart appearance—you'll see him presently—he drops in nearly every day now that they are practically engaged——"

Practically engaged! Great God!

"Once Fay's out of the house I don't know what'll happen to the boy— No one to influence him, you know— The mother so weak— I thought if you——"

"I? Why should you think that I——?"

"Oh! I know a good bit about you, as it happens—more than you think——"

"You know a good bit about me?" Was the man crazy? He knew— What did he know? "And you want me to——?"

"That's it. I want you to work for me as my manager, my secretary, anything you like to call yourself, so long as you look after the boy—make

a friend of him—influence him. I thought, now, an outdoor life would do him good—fishing, shooting, riding, and you are such a splendid horseman—riding would make a man of Tom—he's never had anything much of that sort."

"But why should you pitch upon me?"

"Because I like you—I've taken to you—I like young Englishmen—those who've been gentlemen and are not afraid to work."

"How do you know?"

"What?"

"Anything about me? I might—I might be a runaway convict—anything."

"Oh, that's all right, my lad. Miss Browne has told me all about you."

Lance frowned. He was puzzled, couldn't think for the moment who Miss Browne was.

"My wife's nurse," Mr. van Menterghem explained. "She told me how smartly you behaved this morning—pluckily, too—my wife said the same, only she didn't know you; but it seems Miss Browne had met you on the Lakes, and last year in Winnipeg—she knew the people you worked for in that garage—she told me you were English and a gentleman—that's enough for me."

"Is that all she told you?" Rummy little Blue Eyes! Fancy her giving him a character like this.

"Yes. That's all. But she's a shrewd little woman—has seen a lot of life—I can trust to her judgment—and to mine. Well! what do you say?"

God knows what Lance would have said—a final "No," perhaps, for no apparent reason but an obstinate desire to break away entirely from the past. He had left Winnipeg—a good job it

was, too—because the continual intercourse with Blue Eyes reopened the aching wound every time—made it impossible for him to forget everything: England, the night-clubs, Muriel Lamprière, the police cell, the trial, the verdict, the railway accident. Everything. He was fond enough of Blue Eyes; she was restful and sexless and unemotional. She was peace, but not forgetfulness. And now, if he accepted the Dutchman's offer, it would mean constant living with the past. Not only she, Blue Eyes, but Mrs. van Menterghem: and though Blue Eyes would never give him away, there would be the ever-present possibility that Mrs. van Menterghem might. Reason, common sense, self-preservation, all demanded that he should refuse, that he should be satisfied to leave the eighteen miles which lay between Mr. Crum's farm and Mrs. van Menterghem's new home as a barrier against the possible uprising of his past against him. They even urged that it would be wiser still to put more miles, half the width of the continent, between himself and those who had once known Amos Beyvin.

In all probability, then, Lance would have said a final "No!" to Mr. van Menterghem's definite proposal. He had got as far as: "Thank you, sir, you are very kind——" when at that instant he happened to look up, through the bay-window, where that beautiful spring garden lay bathed in the glory of the April sun. A great whiff of sweet-scented air came gushing in through the open casement, and in the branches of an old walnut tree a thrush said something sweet and pretty to its future mate.

Fay was in the garden. On the path beside the low stone wall, which was aglow with purple aubretia and yellow alyssum. She was standing with her back to the house: but there was that exquisite, slim outline of her, her pretty, shapely legs in the silk stockings, the high-heeled shoes, her bare arms, with the smooth skin rendered rosy by the freshness of the spring air. There was her hair, in colour like the ripe corn fluttering in the breeze. Mr. van Menterghem waited, satisfied that Lance was weighing the excellent proposition in his mind: and Lance, seeing Fay in the garden, did not say "No!" He only saw her back, and her hair and her legs, but he did not say it, even though reason argued and urged and demanded that he should say: "No!"

The next moment he heard the whirring sound of a motor coming from the other side of the house: and a minute or two later a young man came in sight round the corner of the house. Fay turned at the sound. She smiled, and the man came towards her. Lance only saw him in profile, but the outline of that profile was almost the counterpart of Fay's. His hair was of a darkish brown; he wore no hat and he walked with head bent and hands buried in the pockets of his trousers. How exquisite Fay looked with that smile upon her face! Of course, the boy was her brother Tom, and how lovely was the gesture with which she linked her arm in his! Lance could see the two faces quite clearly now. The likeness was striking, and yet, strangely enough, it was the woman's face that looked the stronger of the two. There was a weakness about the boy's mouth, and

a stubborn look about his chin, whilst they showed firmness—free from obstinacy—in Fay. And, of course, no man could possibly have eyes like Fay, with that tender expression in them such as mothers—real mothers—have when their baby is sick.

“The boy is in trouble again, I guess,” Mr. van Menterghem said. “I know that look of his. He daren’t tell his mother for fear she should tell me, so he goes and whines to his sister.”

He was right, was old van Menterghem. Fay was clinging closely to Tom’s arm, looking up into his face and talking slowly, earnestly. Lance couldn’t hear the words, but he saw the movement of her lips and the tilt of her darling head, and her fair hair all round it just like a golden halo. The boy was obviously stubborn, still kept looking down and grinding his heel into the gravel of the path. He shook off, impatiently, Fay’s kind, clinging hands. Lance felt inclined to vault through the open window and give him a good hiding.

“That’s what I say,” Mr. van Menterghem remarked, almost as if Lance had spoken his thought aloud, “when Fay’s married he’ll have no one——”

When Fay’s married! Great God!

Mr. van Menterghem rose and gave Lance a kindly tap on the shoulder.

“Think it over, my lad,” he said, “while I go and speak with Mr. Horfman— I’ll be back in a moment.”

Mr. Horfman! The man who was going to—the man who had the impudence to think that Fay would— Not on your life!

Lance jumped to his feet.

"I have thought it over, sir," he said. "If you can make it right with Mr. Crum, I'm your man."

"Good for you!" Mr. van Menterghem cried, delighted. "Put it right there."

He held out a large red hand. His fat face beamed with satisfaction.

"I hope you won't be disappointed," Lance said rather ruefully. But he put his hand—the slim hand of a gentleman, roughened and coarsened by outdoor work—into that of the genial Dutchman, and the two of them, without saying much more, sealed their pact of understanding with a vigorous shake.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter VI

LANCE remained in the room, watching Fay in the garden. He had heard Mr. van Menterghem's jovial voice calling out a cheerful welcome, and then the smooth tones, with a Teutonic accent, of the man whom he already hated with the fierceness and intensity of primitive man. The man who dared aspire to Fay, to whom—God help him! God help the lot of them!—Fay was almost engaged.

Leaning against the framework of the bow-window, partially hidden in the heavy folds of the curtain, Lance stood there and watched. Fay didn't look happy: Lance couldn't, of course, hear what she said, but he could see that she was not happy. She entreated and begged: once or twice

she put her finger up to her eyes, to catch a falling tear. And the boy—Tom—looked sullen and obstinate. He stood with head bent and hands buried in the pockets of his trousers. Whenever Fay put one of her darling hands on his arm he shook it off. Quite roughly sometimes. Lance longed to punch his head. With the prodigality of youth, he would at that moment have bartered years of his life—five, ten—to hear what those two were saying.

As for time, it was at a standstill, so far as Lance was concerned. He had forgotten all about Mr. Crum, and his having to go back to work, and everything else. He just stood there and watched.

Half an hour went by. Perhaps more. Then Tom Mazeline turned and walked back to the house. He still looked stubborn and sulky. All he had done was to give Fay a perfunctory kiss; he never even turned to give her a last look, although her darling face was turned to him with such a look of tenderness as only Fay was capable of showing. Tom disappeared round the angle of the house, and two minutes later Lance heard his footsteps crossing the hall. Fay remained for a moment standing by the low wall, then she went on for a bit and turned up a garden path which led away from the house. Lance did not stop to think. The next instant he had vaulted over the window-sill and was speeding across the lawn and up the path where Fay had disappeared.

He came across her all of a sudden. She was sitting on a garden seat, secluded in a leafy recess, facing a gap among the boundary trees through

which there was a wonderful view over the foothills, with, in the dim distance, a few snow-capped peaks glistening in the sun. She was crying. At sound of Lance's footsteps she looked up, mopped her eyes quickly, before she realized who it was.

"Fay!"

She rose very slowly, not looking at him at all. He might not have been there. Obviously she wanted to get away, but she was virtually a prisoner in that recess, with Lance obstructing the only possible way out of it.

"It's no use, Fay," Lance said, "you know me quite well. It is really me—I am not dead," he added rather stupidly.

"If you'll excuse me," Fay said quietly.

"I won't excuse you, whatever that may mean. And you must listen to me, Fay. I must tell you that things went all wrong in that railway accident and that I didn't die. I ought to have done, but I didn't. A dear, kind creature patched me up and looked after me like an angel——"

"Miss Lamprière, I suppose," Fay said.

Lance didn't understand what she meant; he had been thinking of Blue Eyes, and now here was Fay— Of course! Muriel— Lance had forgotten all about her—and yet—here was Fay, all these thousands of miles away, remembering.

"I suppose you know about everything, Fay?" Lance asked.

"Everything—that is—I did know—but it's all so long ago——"

"That you've forgotten?"

"If you'll excuse me," she insisted.

"I won't," he retorted. "And you've got to

listen. Of course, I know that in your eyes I am just an unmitigated blackguard—I *am* an ex-convict, there's no denying that, though I didn't serve my sentence: but I have been in gaol and I have been made to do all sorts of horrible things—getting up at five in the morning and cleaning out my cell—and wearing the most awful clothes you ever saw. But I didn't mean to kill that poor beggar. I only meant to knock him down. I suppose I was drunk and I didn't want Muriel to get into trouble."

He paused, chiefly because he was out of breath, but his eyes were glued on her face: searching and longing for a softening of her glance, a less rigid set of her lips.

"God knows I have had a rotten time, Fay," he went on, as she obviously did not mean to speak. "I daresay I deserved it—not for knocking the man down, but for—other things. But I've been given another chance. The woman whom——"

"Muriel?"

"No. Blue Eyes, of course."

"Who is Blue Eyes?"

"I was going to tell you——"

"Must you?"

"Yes, I must, because Blue Eyes is your mother's nurse."

"Nurse Browne?"

"Yes. She picked me out of the wrecked railway carriage. She and her brother. They—they found me a passport—the passport of a friend who had been killed in that same accident; and they decided to give me my chance. I came out here. I've worked at a garage at Winnipeg. I've

been a waiter, a farm-labourer, a chauffeur. All sorts of things. Now I am stockman at Crum's farm, but I'm giving that up and coming here to work for your stepfather."

She turned round at last and faced him:

"You are not," she said.

"I am. And do you know why?"

"I don't know. I don't wish to know. But you are not coming here to——"

"I am coming to look after your brother Tom."

At which she gave a quick, hard laugh and shrugged her shoulders.

"Look after——?"

"It sounds funny, I admit," he said, unperturbed, "but your stepfather—I haven't grasped his name yet—wants Tom to lead a more outdoor life. Fishing, shooting, riding and all that. So he thinks that I——"

"Oh! I've been told that you saved my mother and her nurse from a terrible accident and that's why——"

"That's why you are not going to give me away; that is, you wouldn't have given me away anyhow, you couldn't do such a mean thing, Fay, even though you have long ceased to love me and think me a dirty blackguard and all that. But as a matter of fact I didn't save your mother: I didn't even stop the train. It was the mare that did that, for she went like the wind."

"You are quite right, Mr. Beyvin," Fay said, just a trifle less rigidly. "I am not likely to give you away, as you call it."

"Then don't call me Mr. Beyvin," he said. "As a matter of fact I never was Mr. Beyvin to you."

I was Amos from the very first—you remember?"

"No!" she said.

"Well! anyway," he went on, unperturbed, "I am Lance now, Lance Madoc—that's the name on my passport."

"That's all right," she said coolly, "but, Mr. Lance Madoc, you are not coming to work on this farm."

"Indeed I am, and I'll tell you why: because your brother Tom will go from scrape to scrape until he lands himself where I have already been—in gaol."

It was a bow at a venture, drawn because of the scene between her and Tom which he had witnessed. But in a moment he knew that he had aimed straight and got a hit.

"What can you do?" she asked, and Lance wished to God the softened look which had crept into her lovely eyes had been for him rather than for that ass Tom.

"I can shoot with him and go out fishing. We can go trail-riding and exploring. If Tom has got into bad company, he'll soon forget it. There's nothing like the wild to make a man clean inside. Besides which——"

He paused and stood there, looking out, 'way away across to the blue ether, through which in the illimitable distance peeped the snow-capped heights, and hearkening to the soughing of the breeze through the branches of the firs. So long did he remain motionless that Fay involuntarily broke the silence, which had become almost oppressive.

"Besides which?" she asked.

He seemed to wake as from a dream and said, speaking more slowly and earnestly than he had done before:

"What I mean is that I know something about what's wrong with Tom. I've gone through it all, you see. If I had had someone——"

"You used to be so fond of outdoor things, Amos—I mean Lance. I couldn't understand——"

"No more can I—now. But a fellow gets led away. And there are girls over in the Old World these days who don't seem to care a bit what becomes of a chap, so long as they get their fun. Well! I came a pretty tidy cropper, didn't I?" he went on with a harsh laugh, "and when I heard that your own brother was perhaps going the same way, well I just couldn't think of it, and so——"

Then as she did not say anything, had turned her head away again, he asked abruptly:

"I suppose you don't trust me, Fay, to do any good to Tom?"

"I really don't know," she said slowly.

"You're right there. You don't know. All the same, I mean to try. And you can't really stop me taking up with your stepfather, not unless you gave me away—which you would not do."

"How do you know that? If I thought . . ."

"Oh! If I turned out a worse blackguard still and harmed Tom instead of doing him good, then you would give me away, I suppose. But it just shows how you loathe me that you should even have thought that such a thing was possible."

"And whose fault would it be, if I did think such things? You——"

But he wouldn't let her go on. All through, though he hated her silence, her aloofness, this cold detachment which was so unlike his tender, warm-hearted Fay, he wouldn't allow her to speak: he would have told you that he was afraid lest she should say something awful, something that hurt beyond hope of healing, something irretrievable. So now he broke in again:

"I am the scum of the earth—in your sight especially—I know that. But I am not going to let you say unkind things to me. Good God! don't you suppose that I have called myself all the names that mean an out-and-out blackguard? But from you I couldn't stand it. I should do something desperate: take you in my arms and kiss you until I'd had my fill of your sweet lips—which would be sometime in eternity. Or I'd hurt you, so as to see you fall a dear, helpless thing on my breast, so that I could just pick you up and carry you away—somewhere into the wilds, where nobody would ever see either of us again——"

Then he suddenly stopped in this wild talk and said almost soberly, just as if he were stating a plain, obvious fact.

"I love you to-day more than I ever did in the past."

She shrugged and murmured an indifferent: "Oh!"

"I daresay that's nothing to you," he went on, "but it is a sure fact that I've never ceased to love you."

"That," she retorted, "is on the face of it a lie."

"It is not. I just worship you as I always did. The best of me always did, that is——"

"You are just talking rubbish now, and you know it, and I——"

"I know what you are going to say. That I never loved you—that's not true. That I forgot you and made love to other women—that's not true—that is—it isn't quite true. I didn't forget you, and the stuff I talked to other women was not love-making. What unfortunately is true is that I behaved like a cad and a fool, and for that I deserved hanging far more than for knocking that wretched policeman down. And I know that you'll never forgive me. You can't. But when you feel that you hate me worse than at other times, just remember this, that I have never ceased to love you with my whole heart and soul, and that at this moment, when you are just loathing the very sight of me, I have such a longing for you that I shall probably go raving mad very soon."

"You are nearly that now, I imagine," Fay said coolly, "or you wouldn't be talking such rubbish."

"That's all right," Lance said placidly. "Hit a fellow when he's down. I know well enough that I shall never be allowed to kiss you again—though I shall probably have a good try on my own account one of these days. As well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, and you can't hate me worse than you do. But anyway, let me tell you one more thing—after that you'll be rid

of me and my rubbish talk for some time—and that is that you are not going to marry any Mr. Horfman. I'll put a stop to that, anyway. 'Almost engaged' indeed! so your stepfather said. Well! if you do get engaged to anyone whilst I am about—which is doubtful, let me tell you—it shall be to a nice, decent clean-living man—a man, I mean, not a worm. So that's that. And now I'd better go or someone will be coming along and interfering and I should punch their heads and there'd be a row. And you need not turn your head away, for I am just thinking of your lips and your eyes and——”

Before she could resist, or flee, or gasp, before she knew, in fact, what was happening, Lance's arms had closed round her and she felt a shower of kisses on her eyes and her lips, on her hair and her throat. And equally suddenly—nothing. Lance was gone. There he was, speeding across the lawn. Another few seconds and he had disappeared round the angle of the house, whilst Fay Mazeline remained too angry or too dazed even to move.

*Blue Eyes and Grey**Chapter VII*

THE introduction of Lance Madoc into the van Menterghem household affected the various members of the family in characteristically different ways. The old man himself was delighted with his choice of a companion for that scapegrace Tom.

“Get him away from those gambling and

drinking dens in Glamisdale and the boy'll be all right!" he said to Fay, who listened to the argument with indifference and a non-committal attitude, which implied: "I know so little about the man, I am reserving judgment."

"But don't you like him?" Mr. van Menterghem urged, who had taken a strong fancy to Madoc and thought Fay's indifference quite unjustifiable. "I should have thought," he said, "that you would jump at any means for getting Tom outdoors a bit more, and Madoc——"

"Well!" she said rather impatiently, "we don't know yet if Tom will take to your new man. If he doesn't——"

"Time enough to think of something else," Mr. van Menterghem concluded philosophically. "For all our sakes we've got to do something about Tom, before he lands himself and us in a thoroughgoing mess."

He didn't tell Fay that on two occasions already, at intervals of not more than six months, he had paid Tom's gambling debts to the tune of close on four thousand dollars, and that each time Tom had taken a solemn oath that he would never touch cards or alcohol again. Nor did Mr. van Menterghem tell Fay that he had had to cry halt to all that extravagance when Tom came to him a third time with the same tale of losses at poker—which he grandiloquently called debts of honour. That was less than a month ago. Tom had sulked and cast black looks about for a time, but later on appeared to brighten up. So Mr. van Menterghem thought that the cloud had rolled by, and that, perhaps, Tom had received

a salutary lesson by not finding his stepfather's purse readily opened for him every time. For the past few days, however, the boy had looked more sullen than ever before. Mr. van Menterghem expected the usual request for money, accompanied by the usual protestations of future reform, but he was not the man to allow any youngster, whoever he was, to become a drain upon him. His race, his upbringing, his own early struggles and Calvinistic education had all made him a sworn enemy of those very vices which were bringing Tom Mazeline to ruin, and now that he had said: "No!" he meant "No," and that's all there was to it. On the other hand, he did set about honestly, assiduously, to find a means of keeping Tom out of mischief. To send him away would be worse than useless. Whither? would be the first problem: the certainty that the boy was just as likely—and more—to fall into bad company when away from home, was another. The appearance of Lance Madoc on the scene seemed just like the finger of Providence pointing to a way out of the difficulty. Mrs. van Menterghem was, of course, delighted. Anything that was conceived or arranged by her husband for her boy's special benefit was unalloyed bliss for her.

"An outdoor life will be so good for Tom," Mr. van Menterghem had said, and she quite agreed. She had, of course, heard of Tom's peccadilloes—they were nothing more than that in her sight—she had on more than one occasion, and unbeknown to her husband, given the boy fairly substantial sums of money, but she never

would admit that these gambling debts were anything but the folly of youth.

"Tom is so high-spirited and so proud," she would say. "He gets in amongst those sharks and, poor boy, he hasn't the experience to keep clear of temptation."

Unfortunately, even the fond mother was bound to acknowledge that Tom had never been good at outdoor sports. Neither at school nor college, and certainly not now. He was nervous on a horse and fairly scared of a gun: "Dear boy," the mother would say, "he is very highly strung. Rough sports and killing poor, innocent beasts do not appeal to him."

But if this new young man—what was his name?—could make Tom take a fancy to all those things, it would be just splendid. Mrs. van Menterghem was ready to take him to her bosom, the brave fine lad who had saved her life, and who was going to be the making of Tom. Didn't Nurse think it was a splendid idea of Mr. van Menterghem to have their rescuer, their life-preserver, of this morning as a companion for Mr. Tom?

"They'll go about together. And ride and fish. You said he was an English gentleman come down in the world, didn't you, Nurse?"

Nurse did say so, and also agreed, in her quiet, unemotional way, that it would be a splendid thing for Mr. Tom to go about riding and shooting with Mr. Lance Madoc.

Lance had now gone back to Mr. Crum's farm to arrange about giving up his job there. He would come to Bootham as soon as Mr. Crum

could conveniently spare him. Probably within the week. Fay then could reckon on a week in which to prepare her mother for the coming of the man whom the old lady had once known as Amos Beyvin. Not an easy task, and how was it going to be done? What attitude would her mother—sweet dear, irresponsible, garrulous mother—take up with regard to it? What would she say when first confronted with the plain, unvarnished fact: “Lance Madoc who is coming here is Amos Beyvin. Now what are you going to do about it?” Roughly speaking, that was what Fay would have to say to her mother.

And she knew quite well what her mother would do about it. She would begin by throwing up her hands in holy horror at the thought that Tom—her immaculate, loving, lovable Tom—should be given a companion who was in point of fact an escaped convict, who had been publicly tried, pilloried, condemned for killing his fellow-man—a policeman. It would take hours—days, perhaps—to combat those spasms of motherly horror, and to make a direct appeal on the ground of Lance Madoc’s pluck and heroism in stopping the express train in the nick of time. Fay knew her mother to be weak, garrulous and tearful; she knew that after an endless display of patience and melodramatic appeals to her gratitude and her good heart, Mrs. van Menterghem would give way and undertake to keep inviolate the secret of Lance Madoc’s past, for the sake of the good which he might do to Tom in the future: but Fay knew also that within a few hours of that solemn undertaking the dear woman would

blurt the whole thing out to her husband, to Nurse, to whoever happened to be near her at the moment.

And for many reasons—so many that she had not yet had time to review them—Fay did not want her mother to give Lance Madoc away. She felt—oh! in a mere abstract and detached way—that he ought to have his chance in this New World, where men had a chance of getting back to a more primitive, cleaner mode of living, that is if there was any good in them.

The other alternative was merely to say to Mrs. van Menterghem:

“This new man who is coming to work here is quite nice. I think you will like him. I wonder if you will see the likeness.”

“What likeness?”

“He is most extraordinarily like Amos Beyvin. I never saw such a likeness. Amos, of course, was killed in that awful railway accident, but this Madoc is certainly his double.”

And there the matter would end. Mrs. van Menterghem wouldn't see much of Lance Madoc. He would be busy about the farm, busy out of doors with Tom: he would not often be in the house, and Mrs. van Menterghem only went out driving in the *calèche* with old Sam Tenner on the box. When she did see Madoc she would be prepared. Of course, she would talk about the resemblance to everybody, but only for a while, until something else occurred to engage her attention, and then she would forget all about it.

On the whole this appeared the wiser plan. It certainly provided fewer risks—even though

there might be a few unforeseen pitfalls ahead. Fay thought about it, and thought about it in the small hours of the morning and the watches of the night; and then one morning she said to her mother:

"You've heard about this new man, haven't you, darling? who, Mr. van Menterghem thinks, will be such nice company for Tom?"

Mrs. van Menterghem had heard all about him, also from Nurse, who had met him last autumn in Winnipeg. "Didn't you, Nurse?"

Nurse said: "Yes," and went on with her sewing.

"Well!" Fay went on lightly, "let me tell you, darling, that you will get a shock when you see him."

"A shock? Why?"

Nurse's sewing dropped down on her lap. She looked up and her round blue eyes sought anxiously Fay's glance. She had thought Lance Madoc's secret safe. What did this girl know? what would she say next? A quick look passed from one girl to the other.

"You'll not give him away? Even if you know . . ." was expressed in the blue eyes.

"I know everything, but I'll not give him away," the grey eyes mutely replied. Fay had suddenly remembered what Madoc had told her about Blue Eyes—the angel-woman who had gathered him out of the wreckage after the railway accident: who had patched him up and nursed him back to life: who had given him her dead friend's passport and the chance to start anew.

"Don't be afraid. I'll not give him away."
"Nor I."

Nurse gave a contented little sigh and resumed her work, and Fay went on talking to her mother. The episode had created a bond between them: they shared a secret, these two girls, which involved a man's life. Mutually and silently they promised one another that they would remain loyal—each knowing that the other would remain true to the promise—each wondering how much the other cared.

"What do you mean by a shock, dear?" Mrs. van Menterghem reiterated, with the petulance of the pampered invalid.

"This new man from Winnipeg—didn't you say, Nurse, he came from Winnipeg?—is so like," Fay said, "to a man you and I knew in England—he stayed with us at the Lakes afterwards. You remember him, darling? Amos Beyvin."

"Amos——?"

"Yes. You remember he was killed in a railway accident. Well! this Mr. Madoc is his living image."

"My dear! how extraordinary! Of course I remember Amos Beyvin. That wretched young man, Nurse, I must tell you——"

"Tell Nurse all about it presently, mother darling, will you? I've got to run away now. I only thought I'd warn you. It gave me a shock, too, for I never saw such a likeness. He's got one or two tricks, even, which will remind you of Mr. Beyvin."

Blue Eyes had said nothing. Fay looked at

her and admired the calm way in which she went on with her work—she was darning a silk stocking—work which required concentration and a steady hand. Apparently Nurse Browne had both. Now when Fay, having kissed her mother, turned to go out of the room, Nurse Browne rose in order to open the door for her. Very proper and deferential, if somewhat unusual in this more democratic world, where presumably any young woman, like Fay Mazeline for instance, is quite capable of opening a door for herself.

“Don’t trouble, Nurse, please,” Fay said.

For a moment then the two girls stood by the open door together and looked into one another’s eyes.

“How much do you know?” they mutually asked one another.

“Of course she is in love with him,” Fay thought.

“Of course she was in love with him once,” Blue Eyes concluded.

“Nurse, do come,” Mrs. van Menterghem called as soon as Fay had gone. “I must tell you about that poor young man, Amos Beyvin——”

It took Mrs. van Menterghem the rest of the day to tell Nurse all she knew about the poor young man.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter VIII

Mr. Oskar Horfman. Not that he was, properly THE only member of the household who appeared displeased at the coming of Lance Madoc was

speaking, a member of the family, but he was in and out of Bootham so frequently, he was such a constant companion and pal of Tom Mazeline, that he had come to be regarded as being entirely at home there.

Mr. Oskar Horfman was born in Cologne and came out to Canada as a lad of seventeen. What his actual origin was, nobody knew; to what class of society over in Germany his parents had belonged, it was difficult to say. Without doubt, he had had an excellent education, spoke several languages, wrote an excellent hand, was good at figures, had some knowledge of book-keeping and an excellent opinion of himself. He soon secured quite a good position in a business house in Calgary.

At the outbreak of the war he managed to get out of the country, before the Canadian Government decided on a policy of internment for alien enemies. Where he went, nobody ever knew. Presumably he went to fight for his own country: that, at any rate, was a charitable view to take of Mr. Oskar Horfman. Anyway, in 1920 he came back to Canada, and once more blossomed forth in a more or less important position in Calgary—though his former employers did not take him on. But for some reason or other Mr. Oskar Horfman had become a rolling stone. He did not keep his comfortable situation long, drifted into another, and then into another again. At one time he managed a motor-repairing and garage business, at another an hotel further out west. He managed a dry-goods store, and a real estate agency: he was once a clerk in an insurance

office and then secretary to a local religious association. He travelled for a firm of boot and shoe manufacturers, for a big grain concern, and for the makers of a patent waterproof paint. Everywhere he gave satisfaction. There were no complaints: none to speak of really: but he never stuck to any one job. It was after he had met Mr. van Menterghem and done business for him, first by negotiating the sale of Bootham on his behalf, and then selling some produce and cattle for him on commission, that he finally settled down in Glamisdale.

He had been there two years now and was generally and somewhat vaguely described as a commission agent. One or two farmers and manufacturers had had dealings with him; always quite satisfactorily. Not a breath of scandal rested upon his business reputation. He kept a substantial balance at the local bank: any tradesman in the district was prepared to give him credit for as long as he required it. It was only the ultra-suspicious, or perhaps the out-and-out gossip, who would remark that Mr. Oskar Horfman had a more substantial balance at the bank and kept up a finer establishment than the extent of his business appeared to warrant. Appeared to warrant—for, of course, no one knew actually how much business Mr. Oskar Horfman transacted beyond the knowledge of Glamisdale.

He certainly kept up a very nice establishment. Many called it the finest establishment for miles around. He had a large house—though he was a bachelor and only entertained men friends. He also had a beautiful garden, which was thrown

open to the public on Sunday afternoons. Visitors from the States or travellers touring Canada would drive fifty miles and more to view the gardens. They would bring their own picnic baskets, and Mr. Horfman's servants would serve them with tea under a pretty rose-coloured arbour.

Mr. Oskar Horfman also had three motor-cars, and whenever he entertained his friends at dinner or luncheon he would send these cars to fetch them and bring them to his house and take them back home again. Certain privileged friends who lived at a distance from Glamisdale were constantly asked to spend the week-end at Sans Souci, which was the name of Mr. Oskar Horfman's beautiful house. Many of these were from the States, and no doubt they enjoyed the freedom accorded by the Dominion to all those that are thirsty. Tom Mazeline was one of those who spent frequent week-ends at Sans Souci. He also went about a great deal in Mr. Oskar Horfman's car, going out to Sans Souci for dinner and returning sometimes very late at night.

It was generally understood that there was already a secret understanding between Mr. Horfman and Fay Mazeline, and that the formal engagement would very soon be announced. After which, of course, he would more than ever before be considered one of the family. Now, he simply wouldn't hear of this man—Madoc, or whatever his name might be—coming between him and Tom, and he said so quite plainly to Mr. van Menterghem.

"Tom and I have always been such pals——"

"I know, my dear fellow," Mr. van Menter-

ghem said, trying to be conciliatory, even though he was quite determined to have his own way.

"But when you're married——"

"Well! Tom is Fay's brother, ain't he?" Mr. Horfman retorted. "When we're married, Fay and I, Tom'll make his home with us."

"His mother wouldn't hear of that, my dear fellow. And I want Tom to help me with the farm. Office work ain't any good for him. . . ."

"No, nor farm work either. Tom's too fine to cart manure."

"He won't be after he's chummed up with Madoc. Madoc'll do him all the good in the world."

"Which means that you think I did not."

"I don't say that, Mr. Horfman. But Tom has got gambling and drinking in the blood. Where he gets it from, I don't know. I believe his father——"

"Oh! there's no harm in Tom. A bit of a game now and then."

"Yes. That's all right. But Tom is getting on. And you know as well as I do, Mr. Horfman, that he does get into bad company, and that he plays poker for more money than he can afford to lose."

Mr. Horfman took the glass of whisky and soda which Mr. van Menterghem had placed hospitably before him, emptied its contents at one draught, replaced the glass on the table and took a puff at his cigar. Then only did he say quite ingenuously:

"Does he?"

"Why, you know he does, Mr. Horfman."

You're a bit of a player yourself and you're always about with Tom. You must know——"

"I've seen Tom play, yes. But I didn't think he lost much. He only plays a harmless game with friends at the club."

"He gets very drunk sometimes, Mr. Horfman."

"Does he? You surprise me, Mr. van Menterghem."

"So you see that something has got to be done to get the boy out of all that. You're a busy man—as you say, you didn't even know that Tom lost more money sometimes than he can afford. Well! you can't be expected to look after your friends."

"And you think that Tom will allow this man, Madoc, to chaperon him? What? I can see Tom doing it." Mr. Horfman laughed. The idea appeared to tickle his fancy.

"He won't at first—but he'll get used to him——"

Mr. Horfman was on the point of saying something more forcible, but Fay came into the room just then. When she saw the two men together, she murmured a quick apology and turned to go out again, but her stepfather stopped her.

"Don't go, Fay," he said. "We are just talking about Tom and my new man, Madoc. Mr. Horfman seems a bit hurt that I should have got him here, as it were, to look after Tom. But, as I say——"

The point was discussed once more, with Fay taking practically no part in the arguments for or against. Mr. Horfman was, perhaps, not quite so positive as he had been before Fay came

into the room, and Mr. Menterghem felt that he was scoring a point almost every time. After a while he was called away and Mr. Horfman and Fay were left alone together.

"Will you tell me," she said very quietly as soon as the sound of Mr. van Menterghem's footsteps had died away in the distance, "why you are trying your best to ruin Tom?"

"My best to ruin Tom? What in the world do you mean?"

"Just what I say. You've got Tom under your thumb. He does just as you tell him. He gets out of one scrape into another. He has borrowed money from my stepfather, which, of course, he can't possibly repay. And now he talks of making post-obits on my mother——"

"Well! There's no harm in that."

"I don't want to discuss that. But now that I—that I have agreed to—to your conditions, I must insist that you leave Tom alone, before he has spent or lost every penny he has or ever will have."

Mr. Horfman shrugged his shoulders. With the well-manicured nail of his little finger he flicked the ash off the end of his cigar.

"You talk, my dear, as if Tom's defalcations—or his debts for the matter of that—were my fault——"

"They are—in a sense—you professed to be Tom's friend—you ought never to have taken him to that gambling hell——"

"My dear," Mr. Horfman protested, "a club frequented by the best people in Glamisdale——"

"It is a gambling hell," Fay insisted hotly. "I

know nothing about it, of course, but what else is it? Tom is not yet twenty-one— What sort of people are they who would sit down night after night and play with a boy that age, knowing he can't possibly afford to lose such a lot of money——”

“Tom has been rather unlucky lately, but——”

“Rather unlucky! Rather unlucky, you call it? Let me remind you what has happened in the past year and a half, since you took Tom under your wing. He had three thousand dollars, which mother gave him when she married Mr. van Menterghem. Why she gave it him, I don't know, but she did. He was to have bought himself a nice car with the money. He didn't buy the car, and my poor mother is under the impression that he's put the money in the savings bank. I thought so, too, for a time.”

“Well!” Mr. Horfman remarked with a smile, “and didn't he?”

“On his twentieth birthday,” Fay went on without heeding the remark, “Tom went to my mother with a long tale about buying some fishing rights somewhere or other on which he was very keen. She was to give him the money for the purchase and not to breathe a word about it to any living soul: but, of course, poor darling, she couldn't help blurting it all out, with the result that my stepfather had a straight talk with Tom, who confessed to gambling debts and got two thousand dollars out of him then, and I know of at least another three thousand which he gave him a few months later. Tom has had four thousand dollars from me—I had to sell out some of my Can. Pac.

shares in order to make up the money—and I don't know how much he has had out of poor mother from first to last— When he is twenty-one he gets his share of father's money, and I suppose that that will go the same way as mother's and mine——”

“All very sad, my dear,” Mr. Horfman said, “but I really don't see what I've got to do with it. I've done my best for Tom all through. You seem to forget that at the present moment, if it were not for me——”

They were sitting in the drawing-room, Fay on the arm of a chair, facing the bow-window and looking out upon the spring garden, the peace and quietude and gentleness of Nature. Mr. Horfman was lolling in another chair, sipping whisky and soda and smoking a cigar. He did not finish the sentence, only shrugged his shoulders and glanced, rather mockingly, at Fay, whom he could only see in profile—that clear-cut profile of hers, so like her brother's, only with the firmer chin and more resolute mouth.

“I know,” she said slowly, “if it were not for you Tom would probably have to go to gaol.”

Her voice sounded hard and dry, almost as if she were choking. “That is why—I——” The words died down in her throat: her hands were busy torturing a diminutive handkerchief, now reduced to a damp rag. Mr. Horfman raised himself from his lolling attitude, sat up straight in his chair and raised a protesting hand.

“Don't say that, my dear,” he said.

“Don't say what?” She veered round now and stared straight at him.

"That it is only because of Tom that——"

"That I have agreed to marry you? You know well enough that it is only because you threatened——"

"I have *not* threatened. That is altogether the wrong way of putting it. All I have done is to explain to Tom——"

"That unless I promise to marry you," Fay broke in hotly, "you will send those forged cheques in to the police."

"I ought to do that, anyhow. By shielding Tom over those forgeries I became what is called in law accessory after the fact. I committed a criminal offence. Now, as it happens, I've never committed a criminal offence in all my life, and I may say that I am too old to begin. But unfortunately, my dear, I happen to be madly in love with you——"

Fay laughed. It was such a miserable, hard, unmirthful little laugh. But she didn't say anything. Mr. Horfman threw the stump of his cigar into the grate, rose, and with his hands in his pockets strode up to the chair on the arm of which Fay was sitting. Here he came to a halt, rested one knee on the chair, but kept his hands resolutely in his pockets.

"You may not choose to believe it," he said, "and you may choose to persuade yourself that I am coercing you into marrying me, knowing that you don't care for me: but you are wrong in both instances. I love you more really, more passionately than any man has loved woman before. There is something about you which half kills me with the longing to have you all to myself to—"

No! don't go," he went on and seized hold of her by the shoulder; but she shook him off and went over to the window. He followed her.

"All right, my dear, I won't make love to you, if you'd rather not. Most girls like it, but you're different, I suppose. Anyway, I must just remind you of the real facts of the case. Though you've heard it all before, I must remind you, because you seem to forget—at any rate that is what it looks like to me. You know that your stepfather—among other minor bits of business—does stockbroking for the farmers and small tradespeople about here: he buys and sells on the cover system for them, and often runs into Glamisdale with several thousand dollars in his pockets, which he has collected from his customers against settlement days, and which he then pays into the bank in Victoria Street. At one time—before he knew much about Tom—he used to let him take the money for him to Glamisdale to the bank. Well! you know what happened?"

"You and your friends——" she broke in, hot and indignant.

"My dear!" he retorted coolly: "neither I nor my friends are your brother's guardians. He played poker, bridge, shimmy—and lost. When he had run through his own money, he borrowed the customers' dollars—fully meaning, I am sure, to repay it when he won. But men like Tom never do win at cards. They lose their heads. They stake wildly. They won't listen to advice. But Tom did other things besides gambling with other people's money. He had to account to his stepfather for the money which he was supposed to

have paid into the bank, and so he—what shall I call it?—manufactured receipts which bore the signature of the bank manager. You say that I am leading Tom to ruin, but do you realize what would have happened if Tom had not confided in me, and if I had not proved myself to be his friend?”

As Fay didn't reply, Mr. Horfman went on quietly:

“Tom one day brought a bunch of those receipts to me. They amounted to over twelve hundred dollars. His stepfather had inquired about them, but Tom succeeded in putting him off by saying that he had locked them up in his own private safe at home. But Mr. van Menterghem had suddenly thought of sending for his pass-book. The whole show was on the point of being given away. Tom came to me, as I say, and do you know what I did? Did he ever tell you? Well! I paid in the whole of the twelve hundred dollars into Mr. van Menterghem's account——”

“After you had had over five thousand of Tom's own money——”

“I?”

“You or your friends——”

“Why should you insist that men to whom your brother lost his money are my friends? But even if they were—it was in a perfectly fair game. Tom is a born gambler. He cannot watch a game of cards or chance without taking a hand. Neither I nor anyone else could possibly stop him. I paid those twelve hundred dollars for him out of my own pocket, and only because he is your brother——”

"But you kept the receipts——"

"Those—manufactured receipts—yes! They are for my own protection—and Tom's. But let me remind you once more, that that is not all. When I bought those receipts from Tom, I made him promise that he would never touch a card again——"

Fay gave a harsh, ironical, incredulous laugh.

"You made him promise——" she said.

"You don't believe me?"

"No," she said, "I don't."

"Well!" he retorted cynically, "perhaps you're right. Tom's affairs have really concerned me all along only because he's your brother. But anyway, what happened afterwards was this: Tom, one night after he had lost more heavily than usual, gave a cheque to a friend of mine for eight hundred dollars which he had lost to him at poker. Fortunately for Tom—I may say fortunately for all of us—my friend, just before he went into the bank to present the cheque next morning, showed it to me. It had your stepfather's signature on it. Again, most fortunately, I happened to have eight hundred dollars just then in my pocket-book. I changed the cheque for my friend, who appeared satisfied that everything was in order. Now, my dear, you know as well as I do that your stepfather never signed that cheque which Tom gave to my friend, and that the penalty for forgery may be anything up to seven years' penal servitude. And mind you, that is not the only time that Tom made one of these little excursions in calligraphy. I have three cheques—for smaller sums—which he gave me at different times, and which I keep

locked away in a safe, together with the—manufactured bank receipts—for fear they might fall into the wrong hands. And it was because I told Tom that I wouldn't be bamboozled any longer by bogus cheques that he went and had a try at one of my friends."

Fay had listened to the end of the story in silence, almost motionless. She was leaning against the framework of the window with head averted, whilst Mr. Horfman's mellifluous voice with its Teutonic accent came to her ear as something like a cracked bell, tolling the passing away of her last hope of happiness.

Indeed, when Amos's letters became more and more rare and then ceased altogether, when she read of his misfortune—she always called it that—of the trial, the condemnation, the railway accident, she thought that she had probed sorrow to its utmost depths. But she knew better now. The past, dreadful as it had been, seemed already less dreary, less gloomy than the present and the future.

Fay had gradually in the course of these past two years strengthened her hold upon life. Her mother had needed her so badly. After her widowhood she required both care and guidance, her money affairs kept in order, her health looking after. Fay had done all that. And then there was Tom—already rather wild and very wilful. He had met this Mr. Oskar Horfman and had brought him to his mother's house: Fay at once took a dislike to the man, and soon found it increasingly difficult to control Tom's conduct or to counteract the baneful influence of this new

friend. Fay did not succeed altogether either, but she tried her best, and there was always the hope that with time Tom would steady down. In those days Mr. Horfman's business, whatever it was, lay out in Alberta, a long way, fortunately, from the Mazelines' home. Hope kept Fay from brooding too much: care for Tom overshadowed sorrow for Amos. Then came the marriage of her mother, the move to the ranch in Alberta, the reappearance of Mr. Oskar Horfman on the scene. He was, it seems, a friend or business associate of Mr. van Menterghem, and it was he who had introduced the jovial Dutchman to the Mazelines. Fay would have liked to cut her stick then and there. Her father had left her an independent little fortune of her own. She would have loved the free life of a bachelor-girl, with congenial friends in Montreal, perhaps, or Quebec, or maybe London or Paris. She dreamed of it for some time, while her mother entreated her not to go. And the months had gone by—eighteen of them—and always something occurred to relegate the dream of that free life to a distant future: the motor accident which broke up her mother's health, the winter to be spent in a milder climate, and always, always Tom; his debts, his wild life, his disreputable associates, fears for him, always fears for him—with the remembrance of Amos more and more vivid in her mind; the same thing! the same story! but with a few sordid variations. Night-clubs. Miss Lamprière, police raid—debts, too, probably—London in fact! And gambling clubs, secret drinking—debts and more debts—in Glamisdale.

And now the climax. A hateful, hateful marriage! The end of everything! Sorrow turned to despair, since from this trap there could be no escape. Tom! She could not see Tom go the way Amos had done. Her lover! and now her brother! God knew that that was impossible.

Oskar Horfman had long ceased speaking. He waited now—waited for his words to sink into her brain. Already he half held her promise: to-day he had made up his mind that he would receive her final consent. Never for a moment was he in doubt that she would give it. And not only because of that fool Tom. Horfman was one of those men who have the firm belief that any woman can be conquered provided the man is sufficiently determined and deeply enough in love. Oskar Horfman was both: and in addition he had that peculiar type of conceit which makes a man sure of his powers over any woman whom he chooses to honour with his love. "A man's passion is bound to win in the end," was one of his favourite dicta. "It is stronger than a woman's, more powerful, more compelling, because it is unquenchable. It'll survive antagonism—even hatred. And," he would say to himself when thinking of Fay, "she doesn't actually hate me."

"You see, my dear," he said, as soon as something in her face told him that her thoughts had led her to the cross-roads of destiny and that he must strain every nerve now to guide her towards the turning which was most favourable to him, "you see how delicate is my position. By withholding those forged cheques I am what is called

condoning a crime: I am acting not only against my own interests, but in a way which every right-minded man would condemn. You ask anybody, I don't care who it is. Put the facts before any man you know, and he will say to you: 'It's Horfman's duty to send those cheques to the police.' And it is. I admit it. And if Tom and I are to remain as we were—members of the same club—mere acquaintances—why, I would do my duty as a citizen of the State and let Tom take the consequences."

"Perhaps it would be best after all," Fay murmured mechanically, her lips speaking without the volition of her brain.

Oskar Horfman waited a few seconds before he said: "That, of course, is for you to decide. In spite of the unkind things which you have said to me, I love you far too well to hold a sort of dagger to your throat. Heaven knows I want you, but you must come to me of your own free will. All I want you to understand is that, naturally in the case of my wife's brother—which Tom would, of course, become—I should have to still my conscience. I should have to do for her sake what I wouldn't do for a mere acquaintance, or even friend. You do see that, don't you?"

She did see it and said so, with a weary little sigh. "It amounts to the same thing in the end. You are going to prosecute Tom over these forged cheques unless I agree to marry you."

"If you insist on putting it that way . . ."

"I do insist at getting at the truth," Fay retorted more vehemently than she had done

hitherto. "Heaven knows why you should want a wife who doesn't care for you—who never can care for you——"

"Oh, my dear," he said with a sideways smile, "I'll take my chance of that."

She looked at him straight between the eyes now, those steel-grey eyes of his which surely had never glowed with the fire of a self-less passion.

"Chance?" she asked him—"of lifelong misery? It means lifelong misery, you know," she went on, "to be tied to a woman who doesn't love you."

"Love, my dear, will come along all right," he said. "In time."

"Never!"

"I might remind you of the French proverb: '*il ne faut dire ni jamais ni toujours.*'"

"You are not afraid?"

"Of what?"

Then, as she did not reply, he said: "I am only afraid of your refusal."

"I take it there's not much chance of that—now."

"Will you fix the day?"

"I shall have to talk it over with my mother."

"Naturally. But you won't keep me waiting too long?"

"It'll have to depend on my mother's state of health— Shall we say six months?"

"Three, please, at the outside. You see those cheques——"

"I understand. When can I have them?"

"On our wedding day."

"How can I be sure that I shall have them then?"

"My dear," he protested, "am I likely to send my brother-in-law to gaol?"

"In the meanwhile, what is to become of Tom?"

"I understand that he is to be placed under the care of Mr.—What's-his-name, to whom, I understand, cards and whisky are both anathema. Anything else you desire, my dear?"

"That we meet as seldom as possible."

"If you insist on that, I shall want to get married in three weeks."

He talked very smoothly, with never a hint of irony in his voice or a sneer on his face. Fay only listened with half an ear while he went on talking of the future, asking her advice, consulting her wishes. She was feeling very tired, and in any case she cared so little about that future! so little as to where her home—home!—should be, that she found it difficult to reply coherently to his many questions.

Then presently he ceased talking. He put out his hand, asked to hold hers, and when she complied he raised her hand to his lips. His behaviour was entirely correct; there was nothing melodramatic on this acceptance of a monstrous bargain in which her whole life was to be the price.

A few minutes later he was gone. Fay heard the whirr of the motor dying away gradually in the distance. She was alone. Nobody to see her lean her head against the wall. Nobody to hear her murmur:

"Oh, my God! how shall I ever go through with it?"

*Blue Eyes and Grey**Chapter IX*

THE shack on the fringe of the wild had to be given up for the time being, because it was just a little too far from Bootham to ride backwards and forwards every day: and so Lance, having tidied and closed up the shack, one day wandered down the mountain-side with Emma and Mr. Micawber. Emma had been offered house room at Bootham, while Lance and Mr. Micawber found a suitable room in Glamisdale and drove to and from work in a small two-seater kindly lent for the purpose by Mr. van Menterghem.

Blue Eyes had driven over to Crum's one day to see Lance and she told him of the subterfuge which Fay had invented in order to avoid telling Mrs. van Menterghem the truth. This timely warning had enabled Lance to allow a bit of moustache to develop on his upper lip, to let his hair grow a little longer and to train a piece to fall over his forehead. Difference in dress and a careful watch over one or two little tricks of gesture would, he hoped, do the rest.

Even so, the effect on Mrs. van Menterghem was startling. She had been warned but could not control her excitement.

"It really is most astonishing," she said; "you know, Mr. Madoc, you quite startled me—though my daughter did tell me—didn't you, dear?—but

you really must forgive me for staring at you like that—but you are so much like someone we once knew very well—my daughter and I knew, that is, for Tom was still at college when he came to Canada—this Mr. Amos Beyvin I mean—an unfortunate young man who went altogether wrong—and then he was killed in a railway accident—such a mercy, you know, Mr. Madoc, or he would be in gaol now—wouldn't he, Nurse?"

There was grim humour in the situation. Lance couldn't help wondering whether Mrs. van Menterghem was really hoodwinked or whether she was merely playing a part, knowing the truth and choosing for her daughter's sake to ignore it. Anyway, his was a curious position—he, Amos Beyvin, face to face with these three women who knew all about his past. Any one of them could give him away to-morrow; send him to moral perdition if they chose. If by any chance he offended them. That is to say, if they were ordinary women. Now neither Fay—lovely Fay!—nor Blue Eyes—kind little Blue Eyes!—was an ordinary woman. Lance could not conceive an eventuality which would make either of these two women turn against him: but there was a suspicion of danger with regard to Mrs. van Menterghem. For one thing, she was very talkative. Her tongue had a way of running away with her. And——

"I want to show you, Mr. Madoc," she was saying, "some pictures I have of that poor Amos Beyvin—Nurse, will you look in the top left-hand drawer of the bureau?—There's a kind of portfolio—can you see it?—black velvet with wool

flowers worked on it—I am sure it's there— Well then, look in the right-hand drawer— Dear me! I made sure I'd put the thing in the bureau— Well! never mind! We'll look for it another time— You'd like to see them, Mr. Madoc, wouldn't you?"

"I should very much, Mrs. van Menterghem. Thank you."

"I cut them out of the *Daily Mail* when the poor young man was tried for killing a policeman. It wasn't really his fault, you know: but the whole thing was most unfortunate."

"Most unfortunate, I should say."

She went rambling on, telling him all about the "poor young man," referring now and again to Nurse for confirmation of her statements. She vaguely hinted at a love episode between this Amos Beyvin and her daughter Fay.

"She's quite got over it, of course, but at the time I thought she would break her heart. Thank goodness she's quite forgotten him by now, and she didn't seem to mind a bit your being so like him—I should have thought—but it is most fortunate, really, for now she'll marry Tom's nice friend Mr. Horfman. You know Mr. Horfman, don't you, Mr. Madoc?"

"Only slightly."

"Tom is so fond of him. Such friends as they have been. But, of course, when Mr. Horfman is married, he won't be able to give any more of his time to Tom—that's why we are all so pleased, Mr. Madoc, that you came along in the nick of time and that you'll be company for Tom— It really has been most fortunate."

"I'm so glad you think so, Mrs. van Menterghem."

Mrs. van Menterghem was so excited about all this—what with Fay's engagement and the arrival of this Mr. Madoc who was so like Amos Beyvin, that Nurse had to give her a mild dose of bromide to quieten her nerves. She had a good sleep after that, but in spite of this, when she woke in time to go downstairs for tea she was still full of this amazing likeness. Of course, Mr. van Menterghem had to be told all about it.

"You never saw anything like it, Bert. A positive double. Isn't he, Fay?"

Mr. van Menterghem was bewildered. He had heard nothing of this before.

"Who? What?" he asked. "What double?"

"Mother means," Fay said, "that your new man, Lance Madoc, is so extraordinarily like a young Englishman we used to know."

"Yes. Mr. Amos Beyvin. The man I told you about, Bert, who was engaged to Fay at one time and then——"

Fay winced. Darling mother! she had not been able to keep her tongue from wagging even over that. Mr. van Menterghem, full of tact and kindly good-nature, made an effort to turn the conversation into other channels.

"I'll get Madoc to break in those colts one of these days. We'll have some fun with them, Fay, you'll see."

"I'm sure we shall," she said.

"That's another curious thing," Mrs. van Menterghem went on, reverting to the one engrossing

subject, "Amos Beyvin always was such a fine horseman, too."

"A great many Englishmen are used to horses," Mr. van Menterghem remarked.

"I know: but Amos Beyvin was exceptional—and now this Lance Madoc— It really is extraordinary— I wish I could show you some pictures I have of Amos Beyvin—I cut them out of the *Daily Mail* and——"

"You have some pictures of Mr. Beyvin, Mother?" Fay asked. She appeared very busy over pouring out tea. "I didn't know it."

"I cut them out of the *Daily Mail*—you know, at the time of the trial—and the railway accident—anyone would see the likeness directly."

"Where have you got those pictures, Mother?" Mr. van Menterghem asked. He took his cup of tea from Fay: she tried to meet his eyes, to find out what was going on in his mind; but he was engrossed with his tea, sipping it and then munching a sandwich. If he looked at anyone at all, it was at his wife.

"That's the trouble," Mrs. van Menterghem went on glibly; "I kept them in that kind of folio I had—you remember—a black thing with wool flowers worked all over it—Fay worked it for me when she was a little girl and it was just the right size for keeping cabinet photos—I've got some pictures of her and of Tom when they were little—and of my first husband—then when Amos, I mean Mr. Beyvin, and Fay were taken together, I put one of those photos in there, too: I suppose that's what made me put those cuttings from the *Daily Mail* with the other pictures——"

"Let's have a look at them, Mother," Mr. van Menterghem broke in, in the interval of munching a sandwich.

"I can't find the portfolio. I made sure I had put it in the left-hand top drawer of the bureau upstairs—but I asked Nurse to look for it—and she looked and looked—and then I looked, too—but——"

Mr. van Menterghem had swallowed the sandwich. He put down his cup of tea, rose from his comfortable chair, strode over to the big table in the bay, opened one of the drawers, took out what looked like a large letter-case—a black affair covered with gaudy flowers worked in wool—and held it up:

"Is that it?" he asked.

Fay had not taken her eyes off him. Now she turned them from his face to the thing which he held in his hand. Not that it mattered to her what happened now. Over and over again in the past few days she had kept on repeating that it did not matter. Amos Beyvin or Lance Madoc, as he chose to call himself, was nothing to her: whether he served the sentence, underwent the punishment, which, of course, he fully deserved, was a matter of supreme indifference. Fay, during the watches of the night, when she lay awake thinking of these things, felt that she didn't—that she ought not to care one way or the other, except, of course, for the sake of poor Nurse Browne, who would be so distressed if her kind scheme for giving Amos this chance to make good went agley. That was probably the reason—Nurse Browne's possible distress—which made Fay's heart beat so wildly

at sight of her stepfather holding up the old letter-case and saying: "Is that it?"

"Why, yes, of course," Mrs. van Menterghem said. "Where was it?"

"Where you put it yourself, Mother, the other day. May I look inside?"

"Of course you may—and I do remember now that I slipped the thing into the drawer there—only I thought I had taken it upstairs again—and as I was saying to Nurse——"

Fay was watching her stepfather. Watching him all the time. He had opened the case and was looking at the pictures very attentively. He took them out of the case one after the other, and those he had already looked at he put down on the table. He made one or two comments from time to time, when his wife gave him a chance of putting in a word:

"Very, very funny— Yes, I see what you mean. . . ."

Or else: "I don't see much likeness in this one. . . . They both are quite ordinary-looking young Englishmen. I've known dozens looking just like these two."

Mrs. van Menterghem could not see what he was doing, because he stood behind her, but she went on talking all the time. She also had a third cup of tea and a second piece of cake: but Fay, though she had to pour out the tea and cut the cake for her mother, saw that her stepfather had slipped some of the pictures into his own letter-case, which he then returned to his pocket.

THERE was no doubt that Mr. Oskar Horfman had succeeded in worming himself into the confidence of Mr. van Menterghem, who failed to see that his was the influence which worked for Tom's undoing. Lance, with the keen-sightedness born of jealousy, had seen it from the first, but it was no use saying so to the fat-headed Dutchman, who never saw much further than his own blunt nose. Much less to Tom.

"I like Oskar Horfman," Mr. van Menterghem said at the first hint dropped by Lance upon the subject, "he has always dealt straight with me in business. And while Tom's with him he doesn't get mixed up with all those hussies that haunt the hotels and variety places at Glamisdale. Mr. Horfman is a wise man, he won't have a woman inside his house: not even a female servant. Not that I am a woman hater, mind you! Far from it. I like women. I like their company when they are good and respectable. But for a boy like Tom, give me male associates. And that's what he gets at Sans Souci."

"But you don't know anything about Sans Souci, Mr. van Menterghem," Lance objected.

"How do you mean, I don't know? I've been to Sans Souci scores of times. I've dined there, and lunched there. It's a beautiful place, and Tom should be proud that he's always made welcome there."

"But Tom does drink and does gamble—somewhere."

"At one of those abominable hotels in Glamis-

dale, not at Sans Souci, you may depend. I only saw the best champagne on the table there, and drunk in moderation, too, by all the men. And I never saw a pack of cards out once when I was there."

"Which means that Mr. Horfman chooses to throw dust in your eyes, my friend," thought Lance, but he didn't say so. He had no proof yet, only instinct. But that instinct was a strong one—fed, of course, and liberally fed, by jealousy.

"Once Fay is married and settled at Sans Souci," Mr. van Menterghem went on complacently, "Tom will meet some nice girl at the house and then we'll see him comfortably settling down."

Once Fay is married! and settled at Sans Souci! Great God!!! Whenever that approaching event was mentioned Lance saw red. There were times when he actually planned deliberate murder. He hated Oskar Horfman with all the intensity of the primitive male. He knew nothing about him, except what his own instinct suggested; and instinct prompted by jealousy is not always reliable. "Someone has got to rid the world of that beast," he would say to himself. "So why not I? I don't care if I swing for it, and a trial for murder is no novelty for me."

He tackled Fay about it, whenever he had a chance of speaking to her alone, which was not often. But one day she came out to the corral where he was trying out his own method of breaking in a couple of very wild colts. He didn't like the way they did it over here; he didn't like the throwing and pulling and choking, and had in-

vented a way of his own. Mr. van Menterghem good-naturedly allowed him a free hand.

"Let him get on with it," he said to the other men; "if he comes a cropper that's his look out. But he's a splendid fellow with a horse——"

Fay was curious. She professed a kind of tolerant contempt for her stepfather's new man and all his doings, but when the time came for breaking in the colts, she went out to the corral with Tom and watched. The first colt was very wild and the fun lasted three hours and more. Emma, who was to render assistance later, was there: and Mr. Micawber, though positively ordered not to follow, came padding along on his short stumps. The gate being closed in his face, he found a place underneath it, where, wallowing through inches of mud, he managed to insinuate himself into the enclosure. After which he seemed to find a kind of grim delight in getting in everybody's way. The two men who were there, in case they were wanted, tried to kick him aside—for his own sake—as the colt was careering about like a mad thing and Lance had not the leisure to look after the dog. But though Mr. Micawber was so terribly in the way—sat down sometimes in the very centre of the corral in the deepest puddle, trying to pretend he was master of the ring—he always managed to avoid a kick. Sometimes with one ear flopping wildly he would dart across the corral and under the colt's very nose, when Fay would utter an involuntary cry of terror, and the men swore, fully prepared to pick up his mangled corpse from under the colt's feet: but Mr. Micawber, cool as a cucumber, would emerge a dozen

yards farther on, sitting on his haunches, covered in mud up to his eyes and to the tip of his pointed tail, blinking one eye and saying as plainly as he could speak: "Why all this commotion? Didn't you know I had to get on the other side?"

Lance, intent on his work, had little chance of gazing on Fay; it was only when the colt gave him a moment's respite that he glanced at her with the corner of his eye. She looked adorable in riding-breeches and a blue shirt open at the throat, a leather belt round her slim waist and high riding-boots. She had tied a coloured scarf round her head to keep her shingled hair in place, but a few golden curls did escape from under the bandeau and the breeze played about with them and the sun glinted on them till they looked like fairy flames. She had been out riding all the morning, but not with Lance. He had seen her go off with that . . . Oskar Horfman, and had worked himself up into a state of murderous fury. The work with the colt had calmed his nerves for a bit, but now that it had quietened down a little and Lance was able to throw a glance in Fay's direction and saw her standing there close to Emma with her dear arm round the pony's shaggy neck and her sweet, soft face fondling its nose, and then—oh hell!—that . . . Oskar Horfman the other side of the compound, in elegant riding kit, leaning over the gate, laughing and whispering in Fay's ear, then he felt like emulating the colt, kicking and bolting and striking out, and above all dragging Mr. Oskar Horfman round and round in the mud of the corral.

Lance must have communicated this brilliant

idea to the colt, for just as he got hold of the halter and had called to Tom to advance cautiously and give him a hand, it suddenly struck out with its forefeet and then bolted off at full speed, dragging Lance along, who was hanging to the rope and getting his hands cut and bleeding in the process. Mr. Horfman called an ironical: "Bravo!" and added: "Let's have that stunt once more, Madoc, I didn't see it properly," whilst Tom declared lightly that "he wasn't taking any." Fay had uttered a quick little cry of terror, but Lance was soon on his feet again, and then he called out something to Emma, who up to this moment had stood by calmly watching the proceedings and thinking what a fool that colt was not to take things as quietly as she did herself. But now, at that mysterious call from her master, she was up with her hind legs and lashing out against the fencing on which leaned the elegantly clad form of Mr. Oskar Horfman. Emma bespattered him with mud from his clean collar down to his immaculate breeches, and Mr. Micawber, to complete the process, and delighted to join in the fray, crawled under the gate for the sole purpose of rubbing his very muddy stern against Mr. Horfman's highly polished boots.

Lance had the satisfaction of hearing Mr. Horfman swear like a cowboy, and seeing Fay laugh more heartily than he had seen her do since those far-off days when she was such a merry little sprite. He also had the still greater satisfaction of seeing Mr. Horfman turn quite savagely on his heel and stride away in the direction of the house. The colt, after this last performance, had

quietened down again. Half an hour later Lance had her once more by the halter: then he called to Fay:

"Would you like to tickle his ears?"

She nodded eagerly.

"Then come very softly. He'll be quiet for a few minutes now."

She came, following his directions as to how she was to approach the colt and where she was to stand.

"There now," Lance said, "you can pat his neck and tickle his ears."

She gave quite a happy little laugh and patted the shaggy neck of the colt, which was covered with lather. And presently, when he called to Emma and the pony came along quietly, ready for her share of the work, Fay helped Lance to hitch the two animals together. She was quick and quite fearless. My God! how beautiful she was. Lance kept murmuring: "You are adorable! I love you! I worship you! I'll die if I don't kiss you!" And every time he said it a little louder, wondering when she would hear and look up, so that he could meet her eyes—those grey eyes of hers which had in them all that was pure, and mysterious, and immense in the Northern Lights. She didn't look up, however, and it was impossible to say whether she heard or not; but at times her head came so close to his that the fluttering curls actually touched his lips, and he could feel her sweet breath against his hand. How he didn't go mad then and there he didn't know. He very nearly upset the colt again. Fortunately both Fay and Emma remained quite cool, Fay working

steadily under his direction. When the colt was safely hitched to Emma, and the two of them hitched to a broken waggon, Fay helped Lance to drive the team round and round the corral, he holding the colt's halter, while she wielded a whip at a respectful distance.

When after a solid four hours' work the colt was at last safely tied to a post and calm through sheer exhaustion, Fay, in a happy, excited mood, threw up her arms and like a child cried out: "Oh! hasn't it been fun!"

The men were busy elsewhere. Tom had apparently followed in the wake of Mr. Horfman. Lance and Fay were alone in the corral.

"I'm tired," Fay said, still with that happy laugh.

"Let Emma take you home," Lance said; "you ought not to have stayed——"

"Oh! but I loved it," she said.

But she accepted his suggestion and he lifted her into the saddle. It was late afternoon: the distant peaks were aflame with the glow of sunset; a soft evening breeze stirred the crests of a bluff of pines that stood on the edge of the bridle path, and made the young leaves of the aspen quiver and the fire grass to sway with a gentle undulating movement like a calm sea. Emma seemed to know that she must not go along too fast: slowly she ambled on, picking her way through the mud. Mr. Micawber padded along in the rear, only deviating now and again from the straight path when he heard something stirring in the scrub which might prove pleasant to worry.

Lance walked by the side of Emma. He was

covered in mud from head to foot, his hands were a mass of blisters, his breeches were torn, and some of the kicks which the colt had administered were aching furiously, but he was one of the happiest men on earth. Now and again he could put out his hand and touch her boot—which was all that he dared touch just then. The moment was so perfect, so restful, so still; a wrong word, a false movement might, he feared, spoil everything. As it was, the breeze did all the talking that was necessary. It conveyed all the longing that was in his heart, while the glow of the sunset portrayed all his love. Solitude enwrapped them and the peaceful evening hour, which was a great and godlike silence.

Then they ambled towards the sunset. To right and left of them the young aspen and willow glowed in the rich golden haze, as if their leaf-clad arms were laden with sparks of fire, and their graceful stems bore shafts of light that would endure for ever, rather than leaves that must perish and fall. The sky was of an intense cerulean blue, and over the entire dome a shower of rose-tinted cloudlets was scattered like flower-petals strewn by the Sun-God in farewell to the earth, ere he sank to rest.

The stray curls around the girl's head seemed more than ever like fairy-flames fanned by the evening breeze. The outline of her face was like a cameo graven against the azure of the sky. And her nearness was like a living flame.

It was only when, round the bluff, the house came in sight that Madoc ventured to speak.

"It's no use, Fay, you know," he said.

"And what is no use, Mr. Madoc, please?" she said.

"I can't let you marry that man."

"And how, pray, do you propose to prevent it?"

"I don't know, but I am going to. Great God! can't you see that——?"

"I can see nothing, Mr. Madoc, because the sun is in my eyes. But I can see that we are quite close to the house and that someone has just come through the back gate and is coming this way."

"Not that miserable worm," Madoc said grimly, "or I'll kill him."

"It looks uncommonly like Nurse Browne."

"Then you have exactly ten minutes in which to tell me——"

"What, Mr. Madoc, please?"

"If you care for that swine. Of course, I know you don't. You can't. It wouldn't be you if you did. But I've got to hear you say so, or I shall go crazy. Do you care for him, Fay? Do you?"

"I do think it is Nurse Browne coming along. She seems quite excited!"

"Oh—damn!"

"I beg your pardon?"

"I said damn!"

"I thought you did, but I was not sure."

"Look here, Fay, before very long I shall have to find out if you really care for that worm and really want to marry him—want to, mind you—not being forced or persuaded—I must find out, and when I do—well! it won't be easy for him either way. I can tell you that. But I've got to know, and do you know why? Because I love you—not just care for you like any other man would

care for a woman—but just worship you—adore you—every bit of you—your hair, your eyes, your mouth—your darling hands—your feet. I'm crazy, I know it, and maybe you're laughing at me and not caring a tinker's curse. But it's just life for me—my love for you, I mean—life now and hereafter: because if you go and marry a swine like that Horfman I'll murder him, I'll swing for it and die unrepentant, and if you marry anyone else—or think of it, I'll just—I'll just——”

“Here is Nurse Browne and she'll hear you.”

“I don't care, and if you don't turn and look at me—now at once—I'll pull you out of the saddle and do you an injury and then smash my head against a stone for being such a brute—Fay! in the name of God, look at me—or I shall go stark, staring mad.”

Fay waved her hand to Nurse Browne, who was within fifty yards of them now:

“Mrs. van Menterghem was so anxious,” Nurse called out as soon as she was within ear-shot.

Lance took his hat off his head, threw it on the ground and thrust his hands in his pockets.

“Well! I'm d—d,” he muttered.

Fay had taken this opportunity to jump out of the saddle. She was going along to meet Nurse—her back—which was all that Lance could see of her—giving the impression of perfect coolness and serenity.

“It's all right, Nurse,” she said, “we've had such fun. But I was rather tired and Mr. Madoc's pony was rather slow.” Then she turned to Lance and said very politely: “Thank you so much, Mr.

Madoc, for letting me ride Emma. I really was a little tired."

She did look at him now—her eyes met his quite naturally—as cool as you please. She even smiled because he looked so funny standing there with his hat on the ground, his hands in his pockets, and the glow of the sunset emphasizing the flush on his forehead and cheeks. He did once—long, long ago—when Muriel Lamprière turned the battery of her dark eyes upon him, ask himself whether Fay Mazeline was cold and untemperamental, cold like the wintry skies of her own native land that attract by their wondrous beauty and repel by their proud austerity; but he did not ask himself that question now. With a lover's unerring instinct he knew that Fay was not cold, that behind her serene glance there lurked the smouldering fire of an ardent and passionate nature. Something—everything—had brought this home to him in a thousand little ways, ever since he had caught sight of her again after all these years. The trouble was that the warmth of her heart did not glow for him, that in her, passion was still a smouldering fire, and that it would be another man's breath that would fan it back into flame. At thought of that he ground his heel into the soft road, and folding his arms across his breast, he tried by a mighty effort to still the wild, animal cry that perhaps would have eased, momentarily, this agonizing pain of rage and jealousy.

Fay had gone, and with her went the light of the sunset, the life of the flowers and leafy trees, of fields and skies; with her went the beauty and

glamour of hope. The earth at once became drab and dreary.

Lance raised his hand to his forehead, which suddenly ached as if a red-hot hand had been clapped round it. He pressed the back of his hand to his burning temples.

"Great heavens alive, man; look at your hands—whatever have you been doing with them?—come in at once and have them washed and dressed—before we have you down with lock-jaw."

And Blue Eyes, serene and practical, led the way into the house. He followed her as a child might, unquestioning and obedient. He let her dress his wounds, as she had done more than once before. She was so capable: her hands were so firm and kind.

"There now," she said when she had washed and dressed his hands and bandaged them up. "Sorry I hurt you."

She was so restful, was Blue Eyes. A calm haven after a stormy sea. But it was longing for the stormy sea that kept Lance awake the whole of the night; it was the vision of a woman who looked adorable and boyish in riding-breeches and a blue shirt open at the throat—and who turned mysterious, deep, unfathomable eyes on him—eyes that were like a reflection of the Northern Lights, ever changing, always pure, always for him cold and unapproachable.

And yet once he had seen those eyes aglow with tenderness, he had seen the lips parted, waiting for his kiss. God help him, he had held that exquisite form in his arms and like a fool he had let her go.

Fool! Fool!

TOM was difficult. There was no doubt about it, the boy was difficult. It was impossible to know just where to have him. At times he would be quite nice and pleasant, even friendly: he would ride out with Lance up the trail, or over the foot-hills, and if the horse was quiet he would seemingly enjoy the outing; or he would watch Lance breaking in a colt, or teaching Emma some new tricks: good-natured he would be at those times and quite plucky, too, as when Emma, whose business it was to teach him the finer points of jumping, threw him a complete somersault on one occasion and he landed shoulders first in the mud and his feet in the air: he picked himself up again quite gaily and was ready to get into the saddle again the very next minute.

But at other times he would retire into his shell like a tortoise, become snappy and surly, and as often as not tell Lance to go to hell. When he was in one of those moods it was best to leave him alone. The boy, of course, had been horribly spoilt, and Nature had not been over-lavish with him in the way of giving him self-control. He was terribly weak-willed and a ready prey for any influence that promised solace from boredom. Hence the charm of Sans Souci.

It had not taken Lance a great deal of time to find out that all Mr. van Menterghem's talk about the clubs and hotels which Tom Mazeline was supposed to haunt at Glamisdale was as much gammon as that same gentleman's talk about Sans Souci. It was at Sans Souci and nowhere

else that Tom gambled and lost more money than he could afford and drank more liquor than was good for him. Tom was no diplomatist and Lance got that much out of him in a very little while. It was, in one word, Mr. Oskar Horfman who was the baneful influence that worked for Tom's ruin. Lance had, of course, hated Mr. Horfman from the very first. He was madly jealous, but jealousy, not being usually as blind as his gentle twin-brother Love, Lance, though madly jealous, was not blind by any means. He recognized that Horfman would, to most people, be an attractive personality. He had very engaging manners. Old ladies adored him because in this happy, go-as-you-please country he would bow and kiss their hand, in foreign—delightfully foreign—fashion. Old men liked him because he never seemed to tire of listening to their stories of how they made their beginnings in this New Country, and what sound advice they gave to other men who also desired to make successful beginnings, and who did succeed, thanks to their advice. The younger men liked Mr. Horfman because he was jolly good company, because he dressed well, and because he always had a couple of new—not altogether decorous—after-dinner stories to relate, and the young women liked him because he was a perfect dancer, an excellent tennis-player, and had large, languorous, amorous eyes.

In a word, Mr. Oskar Horfman was popular, and it was only Lance Madoc who hated him and went on hating him more and more intensely every day. But for Tom's sake and for the sake

of his position at Bootham, Lance was not going to quarrel with Mr. Horfman: rather did he school himself to keep up a semblance of good-fellowship with him. With true Machiavellian skill, he set himself the task of persuading Mr. Horfman that he, Lance, was just a young fool, who had by sheer good luck got on the right side of Mr. van Menterghem and was now out—just like Tom Mazeline—to get as much fun out of this dull life as he possibly could.

And in this he succeeded.

It is a fact that some of the cleverest men will make at times the most stupid mistakes—if they did not, no government would ever lose an election, and the world would go on in a very humdrum way, without those changes which are the zest of life.

Mr. Oskar Horfman made the one great mistake of his varied career when he put Lance Madoc down as a fool and invited him to come and dine with him at Sans Souci one evening. Lance made a show of refusal: "I have no dress-clothes," he urged.

"My dear fellow," Mr. Horfman was gracious enough to say, "come as you are. We are not smart at my little house. I only see men friends—genial fellows who won't look at your clothes—Fond of bridge?" he asked casually.

"I'm no player."

"Shimmy, then? Learn that in five minutes."

Lance went. The house was beautiful: beautifully found, beautifully furnished; well-trained servants—all men—ministered noiselessly to the needs of the guests. The dinner was excellent:

the champagne above praise. China, glass, silver, everything suggested the rich bachelor with expensive tastes and an unerring artistic eye. The evening went off very pleasantly. Besides the party from Bootham there were some half-dozen men obviously from over the border. They had driven over in magnificent cars, and most of them left soon after dinner, leaving the host, Mr. van Menterghem and one or two others to sip some excellent port and discuss politics, base-ball and Mr. Edgar Wallace's latest novel. Nothing could have been more correct or more dull. A bishop could not have made a more decorous host.

Mr. van Menterghem drove Lance back to his rooms in Fore Street at the early hour of ten. Tom had consented to spend the night at Sans Souci.

"To cheer my loneliness," Mr. Horfman had urged in his most mellifluous tone. "It is a large house for a solitary man, and I'll drive you over to-morrow morning to Bootham as early as you like."

"What did I tell you?" Mr. van Menterghem said triumphantly, when he took leave of Lance. "If only Tom would spend all his evenings there instead of going to those rowdy hotels——"

Lance said nothing. After he had watched Mr. van Menterghem's car out of sight, he went up to his room and sat down on the edge of the bed thinking. He tried to recapture one or two impressions of this memorable evening—memorable because he wished it to be a milestone in the course of his life—and in that of Mr. Horfman. They were fleeting impressions. Very vague.

So vague that even in his solitude he shrugged his shoulders at the recollection of them and smiled at himself for seeing things which perhaps never existed, and hearing sounds . . . what did it all amount to? A swift glance from Mr. Horfman to Tom Mazeline when Mr. van Menterghem had urged his stepson to return home with him—another when Lance had declared that he was a rotten bridge-player—certain movements—imperceptible almost—on the part of the well-trained, correctly dressed butler—at a given moment when loud voices came through the door, left open by chance—loud voices through which one or two familiar words had come distinctly to Lance's ear.

One of these words was: "Banco."

But after a first visit he said nothing either to Mr. van Menterghem or to Tom. But he did double and redouble his efforts to get at good-fellowship with Mr. Oskar Horfman, and succeeded to this extent, that he was asked to repeat his visit at Sans Souci, to dine there again, to look upon it as his second home—or better still, as his club. Obviously Mr. Horfman had two objects in view in all this: firstly, that of keeping Lance Madoc under observation. Was he really the insignificant fool that he appeared to be? or was he an enemy, all the more dangerous that he had been smart enough to assume such a personality? Also Mr. Horfman's object was to throw dust in Madoc's eyes. Plenty of dust. Enough to blind him to everything that Sans Souci stood for. Therefore he was asked to dinner along with Mr. van Menterghem, treated

cordially like Mr. van Menterghem, allowed to make free of the house, as if it were his own—with reservations, of course. After that first night it seemed to Lance as if both Mr. Horfman and Tom Mazeline were more cautious in their glances: the stately butler moved more like a machine than before, and never once did he hear again that swell of voices, nor did significant, familiar words come to his ears through doors left open by chance. Dust was being thrown by the handful into his eyes: or else a net was being spread for another fool-hen to fall into.

Six weeks had gone by since Lance first came to Bootham. Fay's wedding was fixed for the 25th of July—another six weeks—only six weeks——

"You are not going to marry that worm, Fay, I swear it," he had said more than once. And Fay would then look at him intently for a moment or two, and end by shrugging her shoulders. The look and the shrug meant all too obviously: "Poor fool, how can you prevent it?" And the preparations for the wedding went on just the same. Mrs. van Menterghem was very much better and Nurse Browne had taken a post as matron at the Glamisdale children's hospital. Six weeks! After all, a whole world was built in six days— Could not a hell be destroyed in forty-two? There was a faint hope that Tom might . . . He was her brother, and he did know something of Mr. Oskar Horfman.

"Look here, Tom," Lance said to him on one occasion, "you are surely not going to let your own sister marry such a——"

"Oh, stow that, Madoc, will you?" Tom vouchsafed by way of a reply. "What damned business is it of yours?"

None, apparently: but how can a man help brooding and planning when the woman whom he worships is on the point of being dragged into the mire? And what for? My God, what for? Lance felt that if only he could have the key to that riddle, he would find a way—surely, surely he would find a way.

Less than a week later he had the key. He had dined at Sans Souci. Tom was there, and four or five other men, but not Mr. van Menterghem. Mr. Horfman was more than usually urbane and more than usually friendly towards Lance. Apparently the time was ripe for netting the fool-hen. This fool Madoc had a bit of money, then why not get it out of him? He had the confidence of Mr. van Menterghem—probably handled some of the customers' money. Then why wait?

Lance, fortunately for him, had a strong head, otherwise the champagne with which Mr. Horfman's butler plied him steadily during the whole of the dinner would have proved too much for him.

"Now then, Mr. Madoc, you are not drinking. Tovey, Mr. Madoc's glass wants filling. . . ." This went on all the time, or else: "Only a head on it, Mr. Madoc— Come along, now—I want you to drink to my approaching wedding. . . ."

Lance very nearly threw the contents of the glass in the man's face. Fortunately he kept a tight hold on his temper. There was something

in the air of Sans Souci to-night which suggested a crisis and everything might be spoilt by a loss of temper.

"You never play bridge, Mr. Madoc?" one of the men asked.

"I'm such a rotten player— Unfair on a partner, I always think."

"But shimmy?"

"What's that?"

"A marvellous game—have a try to-night?"

"I don't mind if I do."

And thus it came to pass that after dinner, when the others, as was usually the case, made pretence to take their leave, Mr. Horfman said jovially:

"No! No! Hang it all! Mr. Madoc is a friend—ain't you?" and he linked his arm familiarly into that of Lance.

"Why—of course——"

"And he is going to have a little game of shimmy to-night, what?"

"You'll have to teach me——"

"It won't take long."

Lance allowed himself to be conducted by his host, who still held him by the arm. They all went across the hall and then along a corridor, at the end of which there was a large green baize door. A footman in livery darted from somewhere on the right and held the door open for Mr. Horfman and his guests to pass through. Beyond the baize door there was another length of corridor, and at the end of that a large double door which at sound of all these gentlemen's footsteps was thrown open from within.

"No one yet," Mr. Horfman said; "make yourself quite at home, my dear fellow."

He offered cigars, cigarettes, whisky, liqueurs. There were leather couches all round the walls, and in the centre of the room tables covered in green baize, with chairs ranged around, and lights with large green shades above. At one table the chairs around were surrounded by a brass railing, thus isolating that one table from the rest of the room. Smaller tables were set out for poker and bridge. At one end of the room there was a tall desk with a glass screen and *guichet*, behind which a man with a bald head and gold-rimmed spectacles sat ensconced. The years slipped away from Lance's mental vision. The familiar scene, the tables, the brass railings, the atmosphere close and scented, brought back all the memories of night-clubs, of Monte Carlo, of the Knickerbocker and Muriel Lamprière. He allowed Mr. Horfman to teach him the game he knew all too well.

"You are dealt two cards— No—wait until the banker has looked at his— Yes! take another—this makes you eight and you win— No! court cards don't count— With a six you never take another card— With five rarely— Just turn up your cards—with eight or nine you say nothing——"

While the lesson was in progress the room began to fill. Such an extraordinary crowd! Men for the most part, but there were a few women, too. The men dressed anyhow. Mr. Oskar Horfman, Tom Mazeline and one or two others wore dinner jackets, but the others looked

as if they had dressed in anything that happened to be most handy: golfing suits, flannels, plus fours and sweaters. Most of them had come from over the border, but there were others from Glamisdale, and even from Lethbridge and High River, whom Madoc knew by sight. The Americans drank freely, enjoying, no doubt, the privilege accorded by the Dominion to those who are thirsty. The women had for the most part come with them: they displayed a generous amount of arms, back and legs; their hair was black and straight, cut very short: their skin mellow, suggesting Naples or Sicily; it was in most cases only the finger-nails and pale palms that betrayed the secret which they would fain have concealed. Some of them wore magnificent pearls, and always large diamond ear-rings and spare emeralds or rubies on their plump fingers.

Play soon became general. At the table guarded by the brass railing it was very high. Mr. Horfman and three of the men who had dined with him sat at this table; the other three at another. The familiar word rang from end to end of the room: "Banco!" Otherwise the silence was decorous. Now and again a giggle, often a curse; the rustle of paper money, an occasional whisper. Lance Madoc, with the usual beginner's luck, had won a few hundred dollars: he had been prepared to lose—to pay for his entrée into this mysterious circle, the existence of which he had long suspected but been unable to prove. He soon vacated his seat, stood about and watched, impervious to the persuasions of his host.

"I like to take my first winnings home, thank you, Mr. Horfman," he said. "Another time if I may."

"Why, of course, my dear fellow—any time you like—evening or afternoon: you'll always find company here."

Lance, standing about and watching, took note of many things: he noticed, for instance, that the men with whom he had dined were more lucky than the outsiders who had come in later. One or the other of them would lose now and again, and lose heavily, but collectively they always won. He also noticed that a proportion of everybody's stake was shot down into the slit of a padlocked box which was fixed underneath the centre of each table. No wonder, thought he, that Mr. Oskar Horfman is able to keep up such a lavish establishment and that the gardens of Sans Souci are famed for miles around. Drinking, of course, went on all the time—another fruitful source of revenue, no doubt. Very soon most of the faces became flushed, the men's voices hoarse and the women's shrill.

Tom Mazeline was playing—and winning. His face was scarlet, his eyes bright and his tie awry. A pile of notes in front of him was obviously growing in bulk. Presently there was an interval, a general movement in the direction of an inner room which was fitted up as a bar. Mr. Horfman moved away with the rest. Tom had remained seated, loudly protesting against this break in the game; shouting and gesticulating; but fresh packs of cards had to be brought when the last lot was exhausted, and this always

necessitated a break. One of Mr. Horfman's henchmen explained this patiently to Tom, whereupon he jumped to his feet, strode across the room, and seized Mr. Horfman by the arm just as the latter was going through into the bar.

"What will you take for those cheques?" he asked, "and the receipts?"

His voice was pitched high; its harsh tones penetrated to another corner of the room where Lance was sitting, ostensibly talking to a bald-headed old man who, frankly, had nothing more in his pockets to lose.

"What will you take for the lot?" Tom said. "Cash down!"

"My dear fellow! . . ." Mr. Horfman's mellifluous tones came in strange contrast to Tom's high-pitched voice; and Tom's excitement, his crumpled shirt and general untidy appearance seemed to set off the other's somewhat disdainful calm and the perfect set of his clothes.

"What'll you take?" Tom reiterated for the third time, and thrust a handful of bills right under Mr. Horfman's nose.

Mr. Horfman shrugged. "Nothing, my dear fellow, but the full amount," he said and gave a short, harsh laugh. "No discount for cash."

"You d—d swine! you——!"

"Take care, old boy," Mr. Horfman said coolly and gave a quick glance in the direction of Madoc. "Your mentor can hear you."

"Damn him!"

"Oh!—he's harmless enough."

The two men walked away together, and then

through the bar. Just when they were close to the door, Lance heard Tom's voice once more.

"I'm in luck to-night—I'll have the money—and then Fay——"

That was all. Lance would have given years of his life—his eyes—his limbs, to hear more. "And then Fay——" Imagination went galloping away—it was easy to put two and two together—to conjecture—to guess—"And then Fay need not marry you": that is the way he, Madoc, completed Tom's unspoken words. That was it, of course. What a fool he had been not to think of this before—was not this the most natural explanation for that infamous marriage? Cheques—receipts—forgeries, of course—That young ass Tom in the grip of this Teutonic shark—Fay the victim of both.

And now to get the truth out of Tom—the amount which, paid to the shark, would liberate Fay from this monstrous bargain—The old fellow with the bald head was droning on. Lance, his thoughts in a whirl, saw and heard nothing but the reiteration of that one broken phrase: "And then Fay——"

The players trooped back to their seats; play began once more: "Banco!" It was Tom's voice, excited and shrill. Otherwise a decorous silence, the rustle of money, an occasional curse—or a giggle.

A soft musical voice close to his ear—Lance looked round, half-scared. The old bald-headed man had vanished. In his place sat a woman with velvety black eyes and a smooth, warm-coloured skin: the palms of her hands were pink and inter-

sected with white lines. He gave a slight shudder, but tried to smile.

"Lost a lot to-night, honey?" the woman asked.

He made some kind of excuse and rose, leaving her there on the couch, with wistful black eyes gazing sympathetically after him. But Lance's eyes now looked for Tom—Tom, the creator of the most infamous situation that had ever occurred between man and woman—Tom, whose febrile hands were busy forging the chain that would bind his own sister to this suave shark—this owner of a common gambling hell!

Tom's luck had veered. He was losing. The pile of notes had already diminished considerably. Every few minutes he pushed more and more bills across the table, and they were gathered up either by Mr. Horfman or one of his friends. Some of the visitors had already gone; winners or losers, the night had engulfed them. No sound, no word of "good-bye" or "good night"; the opening and closing of a door: "Are you ready, Parker?" "What, going already?" "Well! A fifty-mile drive, you know." "All right, I'm coming." The whirr of a motor—and nothing more.

The woman with the black, sympathetic eyes was asleep in a corner. Her male companion was winning and was seeing his luck out. It would mean a new pearl necklace or a fur coat. She was content to wait till he was ready to take her home. She looked very pretty with her dark head against the gold-coloured plush of the couch, her rather full figure in a graceful attitude; her hands, with the tell-tale palms upwards, lying in her lap.

Lance was determined not to go: not till he

could take Tom away with him, and wring the truth out of him. He was dog-tired, his eyes ached with the thickness of smoke and scent in the air. By the time the last exodus began, he could hardly stand. Everyone was leaving. There was a hubbub of conversation. The women were wrapping themselves up in their expensive fur coats.

"How did you get on, dear?"

"Oh! I lost as usual."

"Mark won a good bit. If he'd only stopped half an hour ago——"

"Coming to-morrow——?"

"Yes— Sure——"

Tom alone had remained seated at the table. There was a small pile—a very small one—of bills in front of him. His elbow rested on the table and his fingers were buried in his hair. Everyone strolled out of the room and through a vestibule which gave on a back entrance. Three or four cars were still there waiting: the chauffeurs fast asleep. It was broad daylight: the sun already high in the heavens. Lance breathed in the sweet, pure air with a sense of relief, almost of joy. All sorts of sweet, happy sounds greeted his ears; he heard them and was deaf to the noise and hubbub of these people getting into motors, saying futile things, driving away and promising to return on the morrow, once more to pollute this fair, new land with their vices and their corruption. Lance didn't hear them: he heard the farm-waggons creaking along the road; the dogs barking in the distance; the twitter of birds and the sighing of the morning breeze in the stately pines 'way away on the edge of the wild. His eyes searched long-

ingly the remote distance where the foot-hills faded into the fastnesses of the Rockies, and where an abandoned shack called to him to come and find peace and joy in the real New World, the world of manhood and womanhood, not apes, where men were men and not inane puppets, and women were clean-souled; the world wherein vice and falsehood and ignoble bargaining could never penetrate: the New World in which he and Fay might have dwelt so happily together if there had been no knavery, no pollution to keep them apart.

*Blue Eyes and Grey**Chapter XII*

“Tom, you’ve got to tell me——”

Lance had at last succeeded in running Tom to earth—on the verandah, where the boy lay stretched out in a deck chair, with eyes closed and an almost pathetic look of weariness and debauchery in every line of his face—pathetic because he was only a boy and because the good God had made him weak.

Mr. van Menterghem, after a long conversation with Lance in the morning, had gone off to Glamisdale in his car; Mrs. van Menterghem was resting and Fay was invisible; and so the coast was clear. Tom had sedulously avoided Lance ever since he turned up an hour or so before noon, in one of Mr. Horfman’s elegant Lincolns, had flatly refused to give Lance a hand with the colts—still with one or two tricks, but otherwise very

fine in harness—or to go with him on a tour of inspection. He was sullen and silent and had sat in the verandah since luncheon, with a glass, a syphon and a decanter of whisky at his elbow, his eyes closed to the scintillating radiance of the day. Tired, sick in body and mind, his brain was still muzzy with the carouse of the night before, and too lazy to shake himself out of his torpor, he had fallen half-asleep when Lance's voice, unusually harsh in its tones, stirred him into half-opening his eyes.

Lance had drawn a chair close to him and had also, unceremoniously, shaken him by the shoulders, which liberty he resented all the more that he did not feel strong enough to retaliate.

"I'm not going to tell you anything, my good fellow," he mumbled. "I've got a splitting headache——"

But Lance was unsympathetic. "Of course you have," he said coldly. "What else can you expect? But even if you were in a dying condition, you would still have to tell me what Fay has got to do with that abominable gambling hell."

"Nothing that's any business of yours. So you just shut up and leave me in peace."

"What has Fay got to do with that place?" Lance insisted. "Why are you letting her marry that pig-dog without letting her know anything of his disreputable life?" Then, as Tom kept his mouth and eyes obstinately shut, Lance went on:

"If you don't tell me, I shall guess——"

"You go to blazes——"

"I've seen and heard enough—it is not difficult to guess that you are selling your sister to that—"

worm to pay your gambling debts—or worse.”

“Hold your infernal tongue—damn you——”

“If you don’t stop swearing, my friend,” Lance went on unperturbed, “I’ll punch your head. So that’s that. Now then, listen to me. That marriage has got to be stopped—do you hear? It’s got to be stopped—at all costs—How much do you owe Horfman?”

“That’s none of your darned business, anyway.”

“I’m making it my business, though. Don’t you make any mistake about that— I’ve already put one little spoke in Mr. Horfman’s wheel.”

“Oh?”

“Mr. van Menterghem has gone over to have a serious talk with that suave gentleman.”

“What do you mean?”

“Just what I say. I had the privilege of opening your stepfather’s eyes this morning to the remarkable doings over at Sans Souci.”

“You didn’t?”

“Of course I did. You didn’t suppose, did you, that I would hold my tongue about that filthy den of Mr. Horfman’s. I don’t know how the law stands in Canada, but in England we should call his beautiful Sans Souci by a very ugly name and clap him in gaol for keeping it.”

“If you have gone to my stepfather with any tale——”

Tom was now quite alert, sitting up in his chair and clutching the arms with both hands. His face was flushed, his hair was damp and clung to his forehead. His eyes had a very ugly fire in them. But Lance was perfectly cool. There

was still a great deal he wanted to know; and he was well aware that he would only gain that knowledge by making Tom lose his temper while keeping his own.

"Oh! keep your hair on, my dear chap," he said. "I didn't mention your name to Mr. van Menterghem, except casually." Then as Tom, apparently much relieved, sank back once more against the cushions, Madoc went on:

"You needn't worry, you know. Even if we have to call in the police. . . ."

"The police——?" This time Tom's somnolence vanished completely. Once more he sat up, clutched the arms of his chair, glared wide-eyed at Madoc, his mouth dry, his lips quivering.

"What I was going to say, my dear fellow," Lance went on coolly, "is that you are a minor and that gambling is not a criminal offence. Even if we can't keep your name out of the business altogether, you'll come off, probably, with a small fine."

"But I tell you——" Tom seemed unable to get the words out coherently; he stammered and spluttered. "I tell you——"

"You can't tell me anything that I've not guessed already." Lance still spoke quite coolly, casually, but he was observing Tom closely, trying to rile him, to goad him into saying something—a word—which would be a guide to the truth.

"You've no right to interfere in my affairs—you're nothing but a miserable spy— Who told you to spy upon me?— Are you going round like a d—d cur, sneaking about me——?"

"I've told you that I've not mentioned your

name, so far— But, by God! I will, unless you tell me the truth.”

“There’s nothing to tell.”

“You owe a lot of money to Mr. Horfman——?”

“And if I do——?”

“More than you can repay——”

“Shut your darned mouth——”

“And he has agreed to cancel the debt if Fay—if your sister will marry him.”

“Who says that? It’s a lie!”

“I say it. And it’s the truth. I can see it in your eyes—your mouth—your hands—look at them. But anyway, it’s not going to happen. You can take that from me. When the police has done with Mr. Horfman you’ll have no further obligations towards him, and Fay will have every excuse for breaking off the engagement!”

“But, curse you for a fool! if my sister breaks off her engagement——”

“Yes. Why not?”

Tom had jumped to his feet. Hands in pockets, he started pacing up and down the verandah. After a turn or two he came to a halt in front of Madoc.

“That’s one thing,” he said. “Fay won’t thank you for interfering.”

“Perhaps not,” Lance retorted coolly, “but I’m going to do it all the same.”

“You mean to say that you are going to——?”

“I am going to let Mr. van Menterghem know the truth, as soon as he comes back—I’ll tell him how you stand with regard to that contemptible blackguard Horfman— He’s a kind

old buffer and he'll probably pay your debts—most certainly he'll stop that abominable marriage— After which he and I will go together to the police—if he hasn't done so already."

"And ruin the lot of us—" Tom blurted it out, straight from the shoulder, goaded into speaking the miserable truth in sheer terror of the prospect which Lance had so coolly unfolded before him.

"Ruin Mr. Horfman, you mean," Madoc said; "that doesn't worry me."

"Ruin me, and Mother, and Fay— Great God! can't you see— You fool! you fool! my God! can't you see?"

The boy had sunk back in the chair. His elbows resting on his knees, he buried his face in his hands and sobbed like a child. Lance leaned towards him, his heart aching with pity for this young idiot— Fay's brother, and so like her at times—he had the feeling of having tortured an animal or beaten a child, the boy seemed utterly broken and miserable! But the truth was forcing its way out of the depths at last; another effort and Tom would tell him everything, and then it would be easier to know just how to act.

"Come on, Tom," he said coldly, "out with it. How can I see anything while you do your best to hide the truth? But I do see that there's something more between you and that cad Horfman than just gambling debts. You've done something—something criminal—is that it?"

Tom made no reply. Silence obviously meant acquiescence.

"And Horfman knows about it?—threatens to

give you away unless— Man alive!” Lance cried out in sheer exasperation, “why won’t you tell me what it is?”

“For you to go sneaking on me——?” murmured Tom almost inaudibly.

“You know I wouldn’t——”

“You’ve just said——”

“When it was only a question of gambling—and debts——”

“Or else you’d preach at me——”

“I?— Great Lord!” Lance threw back his head and laughed. A strange situation, and no mistake! He! the escaped convict, preaching at this poor wretch! If it were not for Fay— “Tell me, Tom, what is it?” he went on. “I’ll swear to you that if it is—if it is anything—criminal—I’ll not give you away— I swear I won’t—for your mother’s sake and Fay’s. I swear I’ll not preach! Preach? My God! But you’ve got to tell me. If you’ll tell me straight, I’ll hold my tongue and think—think of something—something—but tell me now. What is it?— Forged cheques?”

Tom nodded.

“Tell me,” Lance insisted, and gripped Tom by the wrist, forced him to look him in the face—eye to eye—and held his glance for thirty seconds—sixty—eye to eye—he, the man who was trying so hard to make good, to forget, and this boy who was tottering on the brink of the same abyss into which he, Amos Beyvin, had fallen, and which would have engulfed him for ever, but for a mere chance and the helping hand of a woman. Please God, the boy should not fall—not he—not Fay’s

brother—even if the death of an unmitigated blackguard proved to be the only means of saving him.

“Forged cheques?” Lance insisted.

And Tom nodded once more. He shook his wrist free from Lance’s grip and once more jumped to his feet. Hands in pockets, he re-started pacing up and down the verandah.

“Can’t you buy them back?” Lance suggested.

“No,” Tom replied curtly.

“Why not? Have you tried?”

“Yes. He won’t part with them—till after the wedding-day.”

It was Lance Madoc’s turn to rise.

“Well!” he said, “we shall see.”

Tom veered round as if he had been struck and glared at him.

“What are you going to do?” he asked.

“I don’t know yet.”

“You have sworn——”

“Of course I have. Heavens above, man, am I likely to give you away?”

Tom shrugged his shoulders. Obviously he didn’t see why not. But he did see that for some obscure reason Lance would hold his tongue. Perhaps, Tom thought, Lance didn’t want to lose his soft job at Bootham——

“Tell me exactly,” Lance now said quite coolly, “what it is that . . . Horfman is holding against you? Forged cheques, I understand — how many?”

“Three.”

“Whose signature?”

“My stepfather’s.”

"G—! Anything else?"

"Receipts for money which I should have deposited at the bank."

"How many?"

"Only two."

"Only—! Anything else?"

"No. Nothing else."

"And he'll let you have all those things back—in exchange for Fay's whole life—for her happiness—for— How do you know he'll keep his word?"

"Well! As he says, he's not going to see his brother-in-law in gaol."

"Oh! of course! of course! that subtle argument had not struck me before——"

It was Lance's turn now to pace up and down the verandah. A prolonged, mirthless laugh had escaped him. Tom contemplated him for a moment or two, then shrugged his shoulders. He was quite calm now. The calmer of the two. And he wondered what made old Madoc in such a state. He lighted a cigarette, leaned over the balustrade of the verandah, smoking, waiting for Lance to speak. But after a minute or two he threw down his cigarette, turned and faced Madoc once more.

"Fay quite saw the force of that," he said, "I mean about Horfman not doing the dirty on me, once they were married. I don't think she dislikes Horfman, you know—he's not a bad sort of chap really—he'll give up Sans Souci. He is really fond of an outdoor life, and he thinks he'll buy a farm somewhere near here and he and Fay——"

But Lance was at the end of his tether.

"For God's sake, shut up," he cried, mad nearly with exasperation. In a minute he was down the steps and in the yard below. Here he shouted to Tom, without turning to look at him: "See you later!"

Tom watched him as he strode across the yard, and until he disappeared round the angle of the house. On the whole the conversation had been satisfactory. Anyway, it could do no harm; and it really was rather nice to have someone to jaw to about the whole business: its secret had been oppressive at times and Fay was very un-understanding. Girls were like that, Tom supposed: making such a to-do about marrying a man they thought they did not like.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter XIII

LANCE was fortunately out of the way when Mr. Horfman came over in the late afternoon, in his Rolls-Royce, with chauffeur in livery, exquisitely dressed, as usual, a flower in his buttonhole, an altogether self-satisfied smirk upon his face. Tom ran down the verandah steps to meet him.

"Well?" he asked breathlessly as soon as Mr. Horfman was out of his car, and the chauffeur out of earshot.

"You've heard then——?"

"Yes! Madoc told me."

"That young——"

"Well! you would ask him."

"I know. I was a fool and thought he was another."

"He was just a spy. But what about the Dutchman?"

"I've squared him for the moment," Mr. Horfman said. "It took a lot of jawing, I can tell you. And we're not out of the wood yet, my friend."

"Come and have a drink."

The universal panacea against all troubles of mind or body. Tom took his friend by the arm and led him up the verandah steps where syphon and whisky, not to mention ice, had a full turn before the troublous subject was referred to once more.

"Well! What did the Dutchman say?" Tom asked presently, when they had both slaked their thirst.

"He's given me a month," Mr. Horfman replied with a curt laugh and a shrug, "in which to break off my engagement to your sister——"

Then, as Tom remained silent, he added with a note of spite in his harsh, Teutonic voice: "Rather hard on you, my friend—what?"

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. I was to have given Fay those forged cheques of yours as a wedding present, wasn't I?"

"Great heavens, man!" Tom exclaimed, "you wouldn't——?"

"You're right there," Mr. Horfman said coolly, "I wouldn't give her the cheques if she didn't marry me. Would I?"

"That's not what I meant." Tom suddenly felt sick and faint, all his momentary complacency gone.

Even another draught of whisky failed to steady his nerves. A cold perspiration was running down his spine, and his hands felt hot and clammy. Not so Mr. Oskar Horfman, who, cool as a cucumber, with not a line of his exquisite clothing disarranged, was lighting a cigar with a perfectly steady hand. He waited, before speaking again, until he had a good light, and had enjoyed one or two puffs of his expensive cigar.

"I know what you mean, my dear chap," he said, meeting Tom's excited glare with a steady, ironical glance. "But you must remember that I've just had a pretty hard knockdown blow. And when a man has been unexpectedly knocked on the head, and expects to be hit again sooner or later, why! he also hits out right and left in order to save himself. You catch my meaning?"

"No," Tom replied curtly.

"Well! It's like this. Your amiable stepfather has not only given me one month in which to break off my engagement to your sister—this, of course, for sentimental reasons has hit me very hard—but he has also given me those same thirty days in which to wind up my affairs—in other words shut up the club——"

"Well! And didn't you tell him to go to hell?"

"Yes, I did, and he's going—not to hell, but to the police, if I don't shut up the club— Well! you may not have realized, my good man, that Sans Souci and all that it stands for is my only means of livelihood. If I shut up the club, I shall have to sell the house——"

"It must be worth a lot of money."

"It will not find a ready market because of its size. I bought it for a song, as you know, because it had been in the market for years. But that is my affair and is neither here nor there. If I don't shut up the club of my own free will, the police'll do it for me and make it very unpleasant for all of us. Your old Dutchman will see to that. Besides which, they'll make it impossible for me to start the same lucrative business elsewhere in the country. I should have to emigrate to the States—or to Mexico—both of which I should loathe— Anyway, it will be some time before I find a suitable site and work up a connection. You follow me?"

"Yes," Tom said sullenly, "I suppose I do."

"Besides which I could not very well remain in the neighbourhood, once my engagement was broken off—I love your sister——"

"Oh! cut that——"

"Right. I only mentioned the sentimental reason for which in addition to the financial one, I should have to get rid of Sans Souci and quit the neighbourhood. Obviously I've had a knock-out blow."

"Well! That's not my fault."

"I don't say it is. But its being your fault or someone else's doesn't help matters, as far as I'm concerned. What I want you to realize, my dear Tom, is that I shall be obliged, much against my will, to gather together all my available resources, in order to make a fresh start in life—in other words, I shall have to collect within the next month all the outstanding money that is due to me——"

He paused, took one or two puffs at his cigar, and with pursed mouth blew a series of perfect smoke-rings into the air, then he said:

"And I have redeemed forged cheques and forged receipts for you to the tune of seventeen thousand dollars."

Once more he paused, waiting for his smooth words to sink in. Tom sat beside him, stupid and dazed, with white, set face and expressionless eyes, his clasped hands held between his knees. He was beginning to understand.

"But I can no more find seventeen thousand dollars," he murmured at last, "than I can fly."

Mr. Oskar Horfman smiled. "You'll have to, my dear fellow," he said.

"My God! How can I?"

"That's your affair—not mine——"

"But if I can't—really can't——"

"Then I shall have to——"

Mr. Horfman put down his cigar. Leaning forward in his chair he looked at Tom so steadily, so fixedly, that the boy was finally compelled, much against his will, to return the glance.

"Look here, Tom," Mr. Horfman said, speaking very slowly: "I have already told you that I want you to realize just how hard I have been hit. In one moment I have seen the whole edifice of my fortune fall in with a crash: my engagement to a woman whom I love like a madman broken off, my business ruined, my house sold. Hasn't it struck you that a man who has been hit like that on all sides is just crazy to hit back? To get back something of his own. Misfortune for misfortune; disgrace for disgrace. If you

had not been my friend, if I had been a little less fond of you, I should have blurted out the whole thing to your stepfather then and there; I should have turned the tables on him, told him to go to the police and be damned, while I thrust your forged cheques and receipts under his ugly nose. It was on the tip of my tongue to say to him: 'Either I marry Fay Mazeline and you hold your tongue about my affairs, or her brother Tom goes to gaol'——"

"Great God!"

"Yes, Great God! and what kept me back was the certainty that the Dutchman, in return, would have said to me: 'Let the boy go to gaol rather than you marry Fay!' You know he would have said that, don't you, my friend?"

"I suppose so," Tom said with a dejected sigh.

"So you see that it is only my affection for you which stands between you and the criminal dock. But there is a limit to my self-abnegation. Through no fault of my own I now stand a comparatively poor man—and I hate poverty. I am going to start life afresh—in spite of everything—but for this I must have money—as much as I can gather in— There are one or two outstanding debts due to me; yours is the most important. Either you redeem those forged cheques within the month or I send them to the police—I'm sorry, but that's my last word."

Tom said nothing. His brain refused to act under the strain of a multiplicity of confused thoughts. He felt physically sick, as if, in effect, he had run up against a stone wall and banged

his head upon it. For some time after Mr. Horfman had finished speaking he neither saw nor heard; his senses refused him service: he was like one unconscious, yet conscious enough to feel the agony of it all. After a little while a few incoherent words came mumbling through his dry, trembling lips: "I can't— How can I?— Where?— How?—" Then he turned, fierce, almost savage, to face Mr. Horfman once more: "How am I to get the money?" he cried. "How am I to——?"

But Mr. Horfman was still perfectly calm and perfectly urbane. "As I remarked before," he said, "that's your affair—not mine— I might suggest, for instance, that you get it from your mother——"

"She hasn't any just now, I know—the last time I——"

"The last time you tried to sponge on her, she was unable to help you—hence the forged bank receipts and so on—but there's also your sister—why not try her——?"

"Oh! shut up about my sister!"

"Your stepfather might——"

"He is not likely to, is he?"

"Perhaps not—under the circumstances—not willingly at any rate."

"What do you mean by 'not willingly'?"

"I mean," Mr. Horfman said in his most mellifluous tone, "that he would probably be unwilling actually to give you money with which to pay your just debt to me, but if he knew that seventeen thousand dollars would keep you out of gaol——"

"You mean if I told him all about the forged cheques——?"

"Why not?"

Tom gave a harsh, mirthless laugh.

"Because he'd probably think that gaol was the best place for me."

"Surely not!"

"Or else he'd send me off somewhere, where I should die of boredom— And anyway, what'd be the difference: if he held a perpetual knife at my throat, instead of you——?"

"He'd probably make himself more unpleasant to you than I did— Well!" and Mr. Horfman rose and picked up his cigar, flicked a grain of dust off his coat sleeve, "I only made the suggestion—there are other ways, of course——"

"What ways?"

"Mr. van Menterghem often has more than seventeen thousand dollars by him, in the house—His customers——"

"Customers' money is always locked up in the safe in his room. I am no expert burglar."

"Of course not, my dear fellow—I would not suggest such a ridiculous thing for the world—Break open a safe? Great Lord! Well! I shall have to be going—a lot of business to attend to, you know, with this breaking up of Sans Souci. See to it, my dear boy, won't you? that I have the money soon—say in a week—you'll be glad yourself to see the last of those cheques. S'long then. Don't trouble to come with me. I'll find the car myself. By the way, I'll leave the Lincoln with you; you'll be coming over to see me in the course of the next day or two, won't you?"

S'long, old chap. Don't worry. You'll find a way out, you'll see. It's wonderful what one can do when one sets one's mind on a thing—And when that little business is settled, we'll deal with our friend the spy. What?"

Mechanically, like a dog that's been beaten and is nevertheless too timorous to go far from its master's heels, Tom followed Mr. Horfman down the verandah steps and round to the front of the house, where the magnificent Rolls-Royce, with chauffeur in livery, stood waiting.

Mr. Horfman got into his car, Tom standing by morose and silent.

"Home, Crisp!" Mr. Horfman called to the chauffeur. But at the very last moment—less than a minute before the car got under way—he leaned over to Tom and whispered in his ear:

"The Dutchman often drives into Glamisdale with more than seventeen thousand dollar bills in his pocket—there's a lonely bit of road through Glane Woods—if you want any help let me know—there's Crisp, of course, he's always ready to give a hand to any enterprise of that sort—Parker, too, and one or two others— Just let me know, will you?— S'long!"

The magnificent Rolls glided silently round the drive and turned into the road before Tom gave up contemplating the toe of his shoe. Whether Mr. Oskar Horfman's insidious hint had as yet penetrated fully into his brain, it would be difficult to say. Tom just now was as malleable as a sponge: it is certain that he had not opposed an indignant: "Get thee behind me!" to the tempter's infamous counsel.

A STRANGE, brooding peace lay over the household of Bootham for some days after this. Mr. van Menterghem did not refer to his interview with Mr. Horfman, and Lance asked no questions. Tom was more morose than usual, and Mrs. van Menterghem more garrulous— She did not feel that this new man—who was like young Amos Beyvin—was having a good influence over her dear Tom—what did Nurse think?— Tom certainly did not look happy—he never was fond of horses, and this perpetual riding and outdoor life was getting on his nerves. Mrs. van Menterghem herself was ever so much better, and planned to go to Victoria directly after Fay's wedding and take Tom with her. Didn't Nurse think that this would be an excellent plan?

After three days Lance asked Mr. van Menterghem to let him go away for a week or two.

"I've got on Tom's nerves," he said, "and he can't just bear the sight of me. I'm afraid that my being here has not been much of a success, although——"

"Not much of a success?" Mr. van Menterghem retorted; "the greatest success in the world, my dear man, for you've unmasked that blackguard whom I was fool enough never to suspect. But I'll drive him out of the neighbourhood, you bet—you leave it to me—and then we'll have some peace."

"Even so, I think I'd better go, sir. Tom'll never stand me about the place after this."

"Oh! he'll get over his sulks presently. He's got some sense, that boy—and he's no longer a child—once we've got rid of Horfman——"

Lance shook his head.

"But drat it, man," Mr. van Menterghem said, "I don't want to lose you. I've always liked you—and just because that young fool——"

Mr. van Menterghem was vexed. To him the whole story was not sufficiently important to warrant all this fuss. His stepdaughter had become engaged to a man who turned out to be a wrong 'un; that idiot Tom had got into bad company, and that's all there was to it. Mr. van Menterghem was not going on that account to lose one of the best men he'd ever had with the colts—and a man, too, whom he liked personally. Oskar Horfman would be given the boot, Fay would get over her sentimental episode, and Tom would get some sense knocked into him. After that, peace would once more be restored at Boot-ham.

These and several other arguments did Mr. van Menterghem use when the question of Lance's going away was being discussed.

"I shouldn't go far, sir," Lance said, "and not for good. Just for a little while——"

"How long?"

"Say a fortnight."

Mr. van Menterghem thought this over for a moment or two and finally said: "Very well!" Then he added: "But on one condition—rather two."

"Yes, sir?"

"That you don't keep away longer than a

fortnight—and that you don't undertake another job without letting me know."

To which two conditions Lance readily agreed.

With Fay he knew matters would be more difficult. Probably she would not condescend to speak to him; it was a fact that for several days now—ever since that jolly afternoon with the colts—she had steadily avoided him. And yet there seemed to be no reason why she should not hear it from him, that he knew everything. From what Mr. van Menterghem had said, Lance gathered that he was determined to hound Mr. Horfman out of the neighbourhood and to force him to break off his engagement to Fay. But then, Mr. van Menterghem did not know the whole truth; and it was impossible to conjecture what would happen when he did.

Lance, returning late that evening from the fields where he had hoped to find Fay, and catch her unawares, caught a glimpse of her white skirt glinting through the trees in the garden. She was, he thought, making for her favourite seat in the leafy recess, from whence there was such a glorious view, over the prairie and the foot-hills, to the snowy peaks far away. Lance hurried to find her. He tried to make no noise as he trod on the gravel of the garden path: he wanted to catch her unawares, before she had the chance of running away.

As he came nearer he heard voices: Fay's and another's—that brute Horfman was with her.

"Your precious stepfather has given me a month in which to clear out of the neighbour-

hood," he was saying, "and to break off my engagement. Funny, isn't it?"

"Funny?" Fay asked. "Why funny?"

"Because he doesn't know, does he?"

"No, I suppose not."

"Not that it makes any difference to us one way or the other, does it, dear? As I told you from the very first, certain cheques you know all about are to be my wedding present to you—I have no reason to change my mind in that respect."

Fay did not say anything. Lance couldn't see her because of the intervening trees, but he could picture her in her white dress, her dear face almost as white, and suddenly he understood what was meant by "seeing red." He was seeing red at this moment. Instinct—the blind, primitive instinct of the male—urged him to rush at that blackguard's throat and to squeeze it until the habitual cynical smirk on the face turned to a grimace of agony. What a satisfaction it would be to see that creature writhe. But before that, he wanted to hear more; he wanted to know whether, by any chance, that blackguard had some further hold, perhaps on Fay—knew of something by which he could dominate her, through her affection for her worthless brother and that unexplainable female thirst for useless self-sacrifice.

"If you are forced to leave the neighbourhood—" he heard Fay say after a while.

"If I leave the neighbourhood, my dear," Mr. Horfman broke in, "you leave it with me. If the police interfere with my affairs the cheques go

to the Public Prosecutor. That's clear, ain't it?"

"What good would it do you if you dragged Tom down with you? It wouldn't help you—What good would it do?" she reiterated plaintively.

"No good, but any amount of satisfaction," he said cynically; "so don't let's argue about it. You didn't suppose by any chance that I would give you up just because a fat-headed old Dutchman chooses to threaten me?"

"I thought——"

"What?"

"That something might be arranged," Fay said with a pathetic little catch in her voice. She was obviously feeling helpless, like a young animal caught in a trap, and trying—oh, trying so hard—to find a way out.

"What did you think might be arranged?" Mr. Horfman asked with equally obvious irony.

"With Mr. van Menterghem, I mean. He might be willing to let the whole thing drop if——"

"Not he. Besides, I wouldn't trust him a yard. I know those bullet-headed, Calvinistic Dutchmen. Hell fire for anyone who doesn't agree with them. Gaol or the hangman's rope for anyone who touches a card or sips a liquor. Bargain with him? Not much. As soon as he had the cheques in his pocket he would be round to the police in double-quick time. Tom would be all right, I dare-say, but what about me?"

"And what about me?" Fay said with a pathetic, cynical laugh. "I suppose you have never thought of that."

"I think of nothing else," Mr. Horfman said in his smooth, oily tone. "To make you forget these unpleasant times will be my happy task as soon as we are married. But you must understand this, my dear: that either we leave this neighbourhood together as man and wife, or we all face the racket together, with Tom in the criminal dock. . . ."

"And you down in——" This from Lance, who uttered a choking cry like that of a wild beast enraged. He could no longer fight that primitive instinct. In half a dozen seconds he was round the trees and had Mr. Horfman down in the sanded path, and held him by the throat. Stupidly, blindly, like an animal at grips with its enemy, he was beating the man's head against the ground, whilst Fay, before she had time to take in what had happened, found herself staring, vacant and helpless, at those two men struggling, at arms and legs, intertwined and twisting in agonized contortions, and bodies interlocked; and listening to raucous voices, and stertorous breathing, and cries of rage and pain.

"Give 'em up—give 'em up—or I'll choke the life out of you——"

After which a hideous sound like a death-rattle; and a wild, instinctive cry from Fay: "Amos!"

It was that long-forgotten name, no doubt, that sobered Lance all of a sudden: a ghost out of the past which rose before his bloodshot eyes and, lifting a warning finger, held his hand for one second—long enough to cause his grip to relax on his enemy's throat. And Mr. Horfman, no novice at a hand-to-hand fight, with a dexterous

wriggle of his body, was quick enough to seize this advantage and was presently on his feet, calmly readjusting the set of his perfectly tailored clothes, while Lance stood by, panting, flushed and ashamed, his fingers twitching with the desire to be at that hated throat again.

"You evidently take me for a fool, my friend," Mr. Horfman said coolly. "Did you really think that I carried such valuable documents about with me?" He then turned to Fay: "I can't congratulate you on your champion, my dear. But I bear no malice. All the same, for my own protection and to avoid repetition of this pretty little incident," Mr. Horfman went on, half turning to glance at Madoc, "let me tell you this: the documents, of which you apparently have knowledge, are deposited with a friend, who has orders to make use of them should anything—er—unpleasant happen to me."

He was gone before either Lance or Fay had made a movement or uttered a sound. Fay was looking at Lance and Lance was gazing down at the earth, which still seemed to bear the imprint of that miserable skunk's body.

"Amos, how could you?" Still the old familiar name, and her voice, that sweet, soft voice, that thrilled him to the marrow, charged with a note of reproach and of tenderness.

"I was mad," he murmured.

"What good does anything like that do?"

"None. I was a fool, that's all, but I simply couldn't—" Then he suddenly threw up his head and looked at her. "You are not going to marry that swine, Fay——"

The ghost of a smile hovered round her lips: he looked so quaint with his tousled hair, his flushed face, and that fierce, savage glare in his eyes.

"My dear Amos——" she began.

But he broke in quickly: "Don't call me Amos. Amos Beyvin is dead, Fay— This is Lance Madoc; not a d—d young fool out of the Old World, a ballroom-dancing, tennis-playing ass, but a man, do you hear? a man bred in the New. And as a man I tell you that you are not going to marry that worm whom it sickens me even to touch with my boot. I swear to you that you are not. I swear it by everything that is most sacred. And by God! I'm going to register that oath with what is most holy on earth to me."

And before Fay had realized all that this wild talk of his meant, before she could escape or struggle, Lance had his arms round her, and his lips pressed against hers. She gasped: "Let me go—Amos—Lance—let me go—I——"

But he held her tight and her struggles were futile. His arms were round her, and his hands held her head, with fingers buried in the sweet-scented waves of her hair. He was like a man drinking his fill. And between two draughts of that sweet, mad, intoxicating cup, he looked down into her eyes. They were half-closed. She had given up the struggle; no sound came now through her tightly pressed lips; and the light that shone through her half-closed lids was beyond his power to understand.

AFTER a pretty stiff climb of some three or four hundred yards from the main road and up the mountain-side to the shack, there lies, slightly to the left, a rocky plateau, whence a marvellous panorama can be seen of the prairie, stretching away down below, out eastwards into what seems infinity. A map of the world, it looks like, laid out on gently undulating ground; with a framework of foothills, green in the summer, white in winter, and aglow with scarlet in the autumn. And on a day like this, when the air is crystal-clear, the map looks like a multi-coloured etching limned by a giant hand: the great rivers and lesser streams are drawn in lines of vivid blue; the fields coloured in tender green with splashes of russet or gold; to the right a city—like a child's toy with tiny chimneys and roofs, and small puffs of smoke that rise and fade into the azure. The rolling ground now conceals, now discloses, here a homestead, there a factory or mine-shafts, to which this illimitable distance lends a strange enchantment; here a majestic railway viaduct—a lacework of steel—or there a spinney of dark pines like a splotch of ink upon the high-toned background of this shimmering cosmorama.

And there again the road, like a winding line etched with a fine pen dipped in white or dun, traced from north to south or east to west, now clearly visible for half a mile or more, now lost behind a bluff or under the arch of the railway bridge, whilst along it, tiny things move about like stray ants hurrying to their heaps.

Emma and Mr. Micawber and their human master were often the Titans who from this height looked down upon that gigantic map laid out below them, and upon the antics of those ant-like creatures, whose fussing and bustling appeared so futile from up here. Lance had named his plateau—it was his by right of discovery—Amos' Rest; he felt that after he had dismounted and laid down on a grass-covered patch, in order to dream, he was always Amos Beyvin—because it was Amos Beyvin whom Fay had once loved and kissed—long, long ago.

It was a good point at which to rest on the way up, before the trail got more slippery and more narrow. A good point for Emma to nose about in the rough grass, and for Mr. Micawber to put up something furred or feathered that would scuttle away at his approach. Around and above the plateau the cool green of the forest, the wet earth, the damp moss; the tangle of willow and aspen and bramble nestling at the foot of tall, gaunt pines; and in the great and remote distances the giant Rockies rearing their granite heads, blue and purple, and veined with patches and streaks of snow like marble fastnesses stained by time. While Emma nosed and Mr. Micawber fussed, Lance would lie down on the flat of his back and with closed eyes dream of all that could never be—of Fay principally—her eyes, her mouth—her kiss—the soft yieldingness of her that evening long, so very long ago, at Château Frontenac, when first he had understood what a woman could mean to a man if she loved him—in his dream he would stand again with Fay on the bridge of

Shed 18, and watch the giants up aloft waving great coloured veils of transparent tissue, multi-coloured and brilliant, more brilliant than the moon. But dreams and memories have a way of hurting when folly has made them vain. On a pellucid day, with the world stretched out at one's feet, with the wild above, and man striving below, it was but a repetition of folly to dwell on memories again. And Lance would struggle to his feet and have a romp with Mr. Micawber, and before remounting Emma he would amuse himself by spying through his field-glasses on those ant-like creatures fussing down there—watching them and their little railways and their toy cities, their puffs of smoke that melted so quickly into thin air, their tiny cars and waggons and their droves of cattle. And, watching them, Lance would feel a king up here on the heights—a giant who had the foot-hills for a footstool, and granite, ice-clad Rockies for his throne.

He had not been able to keep away altogether from the shack—even after he had surveyed it that morning and, like the Lord, had found it good; and after he had extorted that promise from Blue Eyes that she would come up when he wanted her, he had an unconquerable desire to go up—just once again—to see that everything was all right. As it happened, Blue Eyes did mention in the course of conversation that she—like most girls for a matter of that—was fond of "Post Toasties," that they were delicious with just a little milk—condensed it would have to be—and, for breakfast, very sustaining; so a tin of "Post Toasties" was clearly indicated, as well as a tin

of tomatoes and some bottled peas, a hassock, and what the young lady at the drapery stores called a duchess set edged with lace. Then a parcel of books, very carefully chosen, and ordered nearly a fortnight ago, had in the meanwhile come to hand—the *Forsyte Saga*, the *Revolt in the Desert*, *Lord Palmerston*, and something more amusing in the way of a novel or two by Mr. Phillips Oppenheim, and something poetic from Mr. W. J. Locke—clear enough excuse for trailing up there with those things. After bidding farewell to Blue Eyes at the hospital that afternoon, Lance had spent a happy evening and night at the shack and wandered down again in the early morning. He was going back to Bootham.

Something was happening there—or rather nothing at all was happening which was un-understandable. According to Blue Eyes everything was going on just the same as before. Even the preparations for the wedding—still fixed for the 25th July—another fortnight—and nothing——! But although a kind of feverish excitement ran through Lance's veins, although he could have whipped Emma for taking him down so slowly to the one spot on earth where he wanted to be, he could not resist the lure of his plateau—just a minute or two before completing the descent—a minute for Emma to nose about, a minute of romp with Mr. Micawber, a look at the marvellous panorama and then down to Bootham for a serious talk with old van Menterghem. Nothing happening?— Had they all gone mad?

Emma was nosing round, Mr. Micawber had

started chasing butterflies. Lance, his hands on his hips, his hat tilted over his eyes, was contemplating the view. It was superlatively fine to-day; and the atmosphere clear as crystal. The toy railway, having glided over the steel lacework of the viaduct, had come to a halt at Glamisdale station, but only for a couple of minutes before continuing its fussy little way westward; Lance watched its progress till the undulating ground hid it from his view. After that he watched the road—busy already, as it was market-day at one of the towns further north—a drove of sheep passed up from Glamisdale, where it had been detained; another was already wending its way patiently northwards—one or two cars passed along the road, disappeared under the wide railway arch, reappeared again a few minutes later and once more disappeared. Lance was able to recognize one or two of the cars, even at this distance—the air was so very clear. He took out his field-glasses from their case the better to distinguish the points in the landscape or the drivers of the various cars—Fussy, ant-like creatures—“Hello! here’s Jimmy Latham in his new Tin Lizzie—Got a squirrel, Jim, to run after the car and pick up the nuts?—Gosh! if that is not Irene Bunch driving her father’s car—doesn’t know the brake from the accelerator—and if she meets Will Revel in his—And there he is, by George! Will?—Good! No accident this time—but you’ll kill yourself or someone else one day—”

“Well! time to get a move on and join the ant-heap down there. Come along, Emma! Let’s get along, old dear!” Lance put away the glasses

and prepared to mount. Now one last comprehensive glance at the landscape— "Hello! Old van Menterghem's car—old man driving—going early into Glamisdale to-day—got Tom with him, too——"

Mr. van Menterghem's car plunged into the spinney. Glade Wood that spinney is called; it is not long, only a matter of a quarter of a mile, but it is very dense with a tangle of undergrowth under tall, rich pines. Lance, his hand on the pommel of the saddle, ready to mount, waited instinctively for a minute or two—just as one would naturally do—to see Mr. van Menterghem's car re-emerge at the other end of the spinney. But several minutes went by and the car did not re-appear. For the moment there was nothing visible on the road; busy five minutes ago, it looked deserted now.

"Funny," Lance murmured; "must have met someone on the road—but I didn't see—or perhaps a puncture——"

With his foot already in the stirrup, Lance glanced once more toward the spinney:

"What in—? My God!——"

Out came the glasses again. Sure enough a cloud of thick black smoke was rising above the spinney, forcing its way, too, through the trees——

"Petrol tank ablaze or I'm a Dutchman— My God!"—and again a fervent: "My God!"

He had his glasses put back and himself in the saddle in the twinkling of an eye. The next moment Emma, sure-footed, was treading her way down the trail: Mr. Micawber padding at her heels.

And all at once from the farther side of the spinney a car did emerge and sped away toward Glamisdale—not old van Menterghem's car—a much larger one—three men in it beside the chauffeur: "That beast Horfman," Lance commented, "must have come from Bootham, but I didn't see— Now what the devil does it all mean?"

The bridle-path strikes the road at some distance north of Glade Wood; but in less than a quarter of an hour, Lance was on the road and was able to put Emma to a gallop. Now it only meant a few more minutes—cars passed him on the way—one came from the direction of the spinney. "What is it?" he shouted to them. "An awful accident!"—but the car sped on, the people too busy to give information. A minute or two later a couple of workmen came along on bicycles: "What is it?" "Petrol tank, I should say—nothing left of the car—or of the driver—" "Heavens alive!"

The smoke had died down—only the horrible stench of burnt petrol and varnish, of calcined wood and leather and—and something else—filled the sweet morning air with its poison. In the heart of the spinney, on the side of the road, there was a mass—black, twisted, unrecognisable—bits of iron—scraps—the frame of a lamp—all that was left of the car——

And then Tom!

Lance hadn't seen him at first. He stood in the middle of a small group of people, the sort that always seem to spring from the ground whenever there is an accident on the road—a couple of errand boys with their bicycles, two girls who

giggled hysterically and incessantly, a vagrant with a bundle over his shoulder—they stood about—looking—now at the black, horrible mass and now again at Tom. Tom, his hands on his hips, his clothes stained, his face blackened with smoke, stood amongst them, as if dazed and only half-conscious. Lance called to him: "Tom! What in heaven's name has happened?"

Lance's arrival on the scene created a mild sensation. He dismounted and tethered Emma to a tree. Tom looked up at him with a kind of vacant stare. Respectful way was made for this secondary actor in the drama to reach the principal star, and the errand boys craned their necks, pushed against the two men, anxious not to lose a single word that was said:

"What happened?"

"Petrol tank caught fire——"

"How? When?"

"I don't know—the old man was driving—he pulled up for something. I wasn't taking any particular notice—but he got out and lifted the bonnet—then he got back into the car—and all of a sudden—oh, my God!"

A car came rattling by, coming from Glamisdale.

"Police and ambulance on the way," the owner shouted. He pulled up, wanting to know: "Who is it?—" "An awful accident—" "Yes, I know, but who is it?" "The Dutchman up at Boot-ham—" "Great Lord! How did it happen?"

Questions and answers engrossed for the moment the attention of the quidnuncs. Lance drew Tom away from them.

"How did you get away?" he asked.

"I jumped—Mr. van Menterghem's legs were entangled in the wheel—it was all over in less than a minute——"

"Look out!" Lance had shouted this warning, and he himself had to jump away in double-quick time. He had gone close up to the heap of débris, and put his hand on a Something that was charred out of all recognition and had once been the kindly, jovial Dutchman up at Bootham. The touch of the hand, the slight displacement of the charred body, let some air into the mass of stuff beneath it—the last of a leather cushion, probably, not yet wholly consumed. A jet of evil-smelling flame and oily smoke shot upwards and threatened the quidnuncs with disaster. They scattered in all directions like flies on a heap of garbage. The ring round the black, shapeless mass became wider—Lance and Tom also had to stand back, till the flame died down first—and then the smoke.

"Someone gone for the police?" Lance asked.

"Yes."

"Who was it?"

"Mr. Horfman. He happened to come along—fortunately——"

"He wasn't on the road when——"

Tom, who had been staring about—anywhere—rather than on that horrible black mass, looked round suddenly at Madoc with a curious, scared glance.

"What d'you mean? How d'you know?"—the words almost shot out of his mouth, as if against his will.

"Nothing," Lance said slowly. He looked up

and pointed in the direction of Glamisdale. "The police with a stretcher," he said.

The knot of idlers had already grown into a small crowd. Cars from Glamisdale and Selby way came to a halt, discharging the occupants, who immediately asked questions; boys and workmen on bicycles dismounted and had a look; one or two women with market baskets; a shepherd with his dog, who promptly sought acquaintance with Mr. Micawber; the vet. from Glamisdale and Mr. Walsh, the lawyer from Mahoon, in his splendid Lincoln; and in the middle of them Lance Madoc, silent and brooding, and Tom, once more with that dazed, semi-conscious look in his eyes.

And now the police car, with the stretcher. The horror of removal—the girls giggling and screaming—why were they there, anyway?—the men trying to help, and as often as not turning away—sickened and faint; the boys, wide-eyed and—for once—speechless.

The police asked a few questions, but no one knew anything. It was invariably the same tale: "I didn't see how it happened. I only got there after it was all over." Tom told his tale quite clearly—the same as he had already told Madoc.

"Will you get in with us, Mr. Mazeline?" the sergeant suggested. "We should like your deposition as soon as possible."

The stretcher, draped over with a rug, was already in position; two men of the police sat in front of the car, but there was room for one more by the side of the stretcher. Tom looked up and a kind of shudder seemed to go right through him. He looked almost like a hunted animal as his un-

steady glance wandered from one face to another, as if in an appeal for sympathy.

"I'll take you along, Mr. Mazeline," said the vet. from Glamisdale, "if you'll jump up."

And so the procession started on its way. The police car with its burden on in front, then the vet.'s dog-cart with its owner and Tom Mazeline, followed at a short distance by Lance on Emma, with Mr. Micawber tucked up inside his coat. The crowd of newsmongers melted away to carry the gruesome tidings to those who had not been fortunate enough to see, at any rate, something of the excitement which would prove food for gossip for many a long day.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter XVI

LANCE MADOC stabled Emma in the shed belonging to Mr. Faraday, the veterinary surgeon, who always put the pony up whenever Madoc required it. Then he walked over to Sans Souci. His first thought had been to go to the police station with Tom, but when he saw Mr. Horfman's car standing outside the station, he thought better of it. The police sergeant had not taken any special notice of him, and had not suggested asking him any questions, so he did not volunteer any information. His thoughts and the recollection of what he had seen—or not seen—from his plateau were too vague and too confused to put into words as yet.

Mr. Horfman's car passed him on the road to Sans Souci. Mr. Horfman was driving with Tom beside him, and the two men, whom Lance had more than once seen at Mr. Horfman's place, lolled on the cushions in the back of the car.

"Going our way, Mr. Madoc?" Mr. Horfman shouted to him, and slowed down as he passed.

"Thanks, I prefer walking," Lance replied.

The men in the car seemed to enjoy this as a joke, for they all laughed, except Tom, who threw him a last, unexplainable look as the car sped away.

When Madoc reached Sans Souci, the servant at the door said that Mr. Horfman was in the smoking-room, and was expecting Mr. Madoc. Lance followed the man, who showed him into the small comfortably furnished room where Mr. Horfman and Tom, sprawling in cosy arm-chairs, sat smoking and sipping whisky and soda.

"Ah! here's our friend Madoc," Mr. Horfman said genially. "I thought we should have the pleasure of seeing you, sir. Have a drink?"

"No, thank you."

"A cigar?"

"No, thanks."

"Well, sit down, anyway."

"Thank you," Lance said, "I prefer to stand."

"Have it your own way," Mr. Horfman said with a graceful wave of his hand. "Tom, help yourself. You want another pick-me-up——"

Tom picked up the bottle of whisky, and was on the point of pouring some into his glass, when Lance put a hand on his arm.

"Leave that alone for God's sake, Tom," he

said. "You don't want to get fuddled now."

"Don't want to——? What in hell do you mean?"

His face was scarlet, his hair tousled: he was obviously trying to appear blustering and defiant. Mr. Horfman leaned back full length in the deep arm-chair and gave a quick, ironical laugh.

"Keep your hair on, Tom," he said. "I told you we'd better hear what our interfering friend here would say. Now then, Mr. Madoc," he went on quite pleasantly: "if you won't drink and you won't smoke and won't even sit down, perhaps you'll kindly tell us why you are here."

"Because I want to get Tom away before——"

"Before what? Oh, don't mind me," said Mr. Horfman, "I'm a friend of the family."

"The curse of the family, you mean," Lance said, speaking as coolly as Mr. Horfman himself; "but you've done your worst now, and now Tom is coming away at last—with me."

"Coming away with you—am I?"

"It's the best you can do—and you know it. What happened to-day in Glade Wood is not going to end like this. You don't suppose that the police are quite such fools as to accept without investigation the very lame story which you told——"

"The lame story—do you mean to say——?"

"Don't interfere, Tom," Mr. Horfman said suavely, "we are going to hear something very interesting, I think."

"You're right there, Mr. Oskar Horfman,"

Lance said just as suavely. "For one thing you are going to hear this from me: that the dastardly murder of Mr. van Menterghem is not going to help you. He ordered you out of the province on penalty of denouncing you to the police as a disreputable keeper of a gambling hell, and he gave you one month in which to break off your engagement to Miss Mazeline. Now that you have silenced him in that cowardly manner, I'll see to it that, even if you don't swing for that hideous deed of this morning, you're hounded out of the place. As for your engagement, I'm not going to be as lenient as Mr. van Menterghem: I'm not going to let you break it off; I'll do it for you, and in a manner that will leave no doubt in Miss Mazeline's mind of the narrow escape she's had of being tied for life to an infamous blackguard."

Lance was feeling quite calm. He never raised his voice once, nor did he feel that he was losing his temper all the while that he was looking straight into the smooth, ironical face of this contemptible coward. Nor did Mr. Oskar Horfman turn a hair. He lolled back in his chair, enjoying his cigar and taking frequent sips at his stiff glass of whisky. Now, when Lance paused one moment and turned to speak to Tom, he said in his most mellifluous tones:

"What did I tell you, Tom? I knew that our friend here would be most interesting."

"Tom," Lance said, ignoring the other for the moment, "I hear your mother has gone up to Lake Louise to stay with her sister. So the first thing you'll have to do will be to go up there and

break this awful news to her. But after that, don't you think you'll like to come away—somewhere? I tell you I'm going to raise hell round this place and your friend Mr. Oskar Horfman."

"You leave me alone," Tom muttered, "and if you go interfering——"

"I am going to interfere," Lance said, "make no mistake about that. When I said that I would break off your sister's engagement to this black-guard, I meant that I would do it, unless you did. You can go back to Bootham now and tell her everything—everything, of course, except the awful truth about this morning. Her knowing that would do no good, and it would break her heart. But she'll understand, and as there's probably going to be a hell of a scandal round Mr.—er—Horfman and his precious Sans Souci, it would be best for her to be out of the way. She'll probably go up to Lake Louise for a time, and you may be sure that when I have my interview with the police, I'll do my best to keep your name out of the business—for her sake."

"If you don't shut up—" Tom had jumped up like a snarling dog half frightened of a stick that may be hidden somewhere. He came up close to Lance and glared rage and defiance into his eyes. "If you don't shut up—" he said again.

"Don't be a fool, Tom," Lance said again coolly. "You know I mean every word I say, don't you?"

"Don't be a fool," Mr. Horfman echoed with an elegant drawl. He raised himself out of his comfortable chair and thrust Tom out of the

way. Then he stepped close—very close—up to Lance Madoc, looked at him eye to eye, an ugly sneer on his face.

“So you mean every word you say, do you, my friend?” he said.

“I’m not your friend,” Lance replied. “But I do mean every word I say.”

“You propose to stand between me and my engagement to Miss Mazeline?”

“I do.”

“And to hound me, as you vulgarly call it, out of this neighbourhood?”

“Most decidedly.”

“And how do you propose to do these things, may I ask?”

“By telling Miss Mazeline the truth, unless Tom does that for me, and by warning the police of what goes on at Sans Souci. They will do the rest.”

“And is that all?”

“No. Not quite.” And now it was Lance Madoc who came very close up to Mr. Horfman, and from his greater height looked down into the mocking, unruffled face. Then he said: “I also propose to tell the police what I observed from the point of vantage where I stood at the time when the petrol tank of Mr. van Menterghem’s car was set ablaze.”

A muttered cry from Tom. A shadow—it was nothing more than that—seemed to pass like a breath over Mr. Horfman’s eyes: for the space of one second they were just a shade less steady, a shade less mocking in expression. But it was only for one second; the next moment he raised

his cigar to his lips, took a long puff, flicked off the ash and finally said coolly:

"Ah! And what did you see, may I ask?"

"Most," Lance said, "though not all that happened."

"Ah!" Mr. Horfman said once more.

"And do I understand you to say that you propose to go to the police with some pretty story of what you think you saw on that occasion?"

"I am going to the police with the story of what I saw. Most certainly."

"You are going to the police——?"

"I am," Lance said.

"What?" Mr. Horfman queried very slowly and very quietly, as if measuring every word. "You are going to the police? . . . You? . . . Amos Beyvin?"

For the space of half a dozen seconds there was dead silence in the room. Mr. Horfman, gracefully balancing himself on his heels and toes, took one or two puffs at his cigar. Having delivered his knock-out blow, he was watching what effect it was having on Lance Madoc's face. He looked him up and down from head to toe, then uttered a short, mocking laugh and turned away. But apparently he was not quite satisfied that his shaft had quite gone home, for he was the first to break the silence, in which the gentle ticking of the expensive bracket-clock had seemed like deafening strokes upon a gong.

"You'll find it awkward, I imagine, Mr. Amos Beyvin," he said, "to have the police interfering in your affairs. What? Nor do I think that the police will readily listen to denunciations

made by an escaped convict who for two years has lived a life of fraud, instead of serving his sentence in Dartmoor——”

“That we shall see,” Lance retorted calmly; “but I think you will find, Mr. Horfman, that in certain matters the police will listen to an escaped convict just as readily as to an honest man.”

“What do you mean exactly by that?”

“That your veiled threat, such as it is, does not influence me in the least. You can do your damnedest, but I am going to Miss Mazeline first and to the police afterwards.”

“Where I shall have forestalled you, remember, with these interesting newspaper cuttings, which the late Mr. van Menterghem, it seems, carried about with him.”

He turned to the mantelpiece and took up a pocket-book which lay there on the shelf. It was bulging over with money. Mr. Horfman fingered it with a light, delicate touch of his smooth white hands. Out of one of the flaps he took a bundle of printed matter. Then he put the pocket-book down and, one by one, examined the scraps of paper—newspaper cuttings with pictures interspersed, while Lance watched him in silence and Tom sank down in a chair and hid his face in his hands.

“So you killed Mr. van Menterghem,” Lance said, “and robbed him of his pocket-book? You’ll hang for that, Mr. Horfman, even on a convict’s evidence.”

“I didn’t kill the old Dutchman,” Mr. Horfman retorted cynically, “Tom did.”

"You miserable cur—!" It was Tom, not Lance, who uttered this cry like an animal goaded into rage. He would have been at the other's throat, only he had not the strength for a hand-to-hand fight. He was broken and wretched, and terrified of both these men, whose hatred for one another seemed to have made of him a plaything; a ball to be tossed into the mire, or pricked into a soiled rag, at will. "You miserable cur—" he reiterated again and again. "You damned miserable cur—" He still sat with his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, his fingers tugging at his matted hair. He was sobbing like a child. Lance didn't know which of these two men he despised most; but he was sorry for Tom, and then there was Fay——

Mr. Horfman had put the newspaper cuttings carefully back into the pocket-book. In a corner of the room there was a Milner's safe and he locked the pocket-book up in that. After which he turned back to Lance.

"In case," he said, "you should think that I am talking through my hat, Mr. Beyvin, let me tell you this: I am not the only one who saw Tom knock Mr. van Menterghem on the head and extract that pocket-book out of the old man's pocket. I had two friends with me at the time; so there are witnesses to prove the truth of what I say, and to clear me from any dirty lie you may say about me——"

"A couple of miserable cravens who are in your debt, I suppose——" Lance said.

"That statement you'll find difficult to substantiate, Mr. Beyvin, so I should not put it for-

ward if I were you. Besides," Mr. Horfman added with his ugly sneer, "look at Tom. Does he look like denying the truth?"

Lance turned to Tom. "Tom, is it true?" he asked. But the boy was at the end of his tether; he had neither nerve nor pluck left in him. He leaned back in his chair, with eyes closed as if to shut out the whole world from his consciousness; his face was streaming with moisture and with tears, his slobbering lips quivered as if in a vain attempt to speak.

"You've cowed him," Lance burst out involuntarily, hot with indignation which he had tried to keep in check, "until the poor wretch can't stand up for himself——"

"That may or may not be," Mr. Horfman retorted coolly, "but it only shows you that he won't be able to stand up for himself before the police either— He doesn't look like an innocent man, does he?"

"Tom!— In heaven's name pull yourself together— Is it true?"

Tom opened his eyes, looked round him with a vacant stare until his bleary eyes alighted on Mr. Horfman: a sudden light shot through them; a spark of rage and hatred. With limp arm and trembling hand he pointed to the man who had been the bane of his life: "He wanted money——" he babbled incoherently, "he had those cheques—he whispered something about—about my step-father carrying money——"

Mr. Horfman gave an indifferent shrug:

"‘The woman tempted me and I did eat,’" he quoted lightly.

"You know you did suggest—" Tom murmured, "and afterwards——"

"Afterwards!" said Mr. Horfman. "You are right about afterwards. I did advise setting fire to the car, as the only means of not being caught red-handed. Wasn't I right, Mr. Beyvin? I happened, luckily, to be passing by— in my car, of course, with my friends——"

"And that's a lie," Lance broke in. "You did not happen to be passing by; you lay in wait in the wood for this—this young fool, you and your precious friends. If you had happened to be passing by, I should have seen your car from where I stood——"

Lance checked himself. He hadn't meant to say that, for it gave away a part of his secret. Mr. Horfman was quick enough to seize upon it:

"So that's the pretty tale you're going to tell the police, Mr. Beyvin. Well!" he went on with a shrug: "if you will, you will. Have it your own way? My being in Glade Wood at the time that Tom knocked old van Menterghem on the head is not a hanging matter, either for me or my two friends. I see you are determined to get us all into the soup, yourself included. As I say, have it your own way. Anyway, as far as I am concerned, even if the police did make themselves rather unpleasant at Sans Souci, and even if I should have to leave the neighbourhood, it won't mean two years' penal servitude in Dartmoor for me, nor the hangman's rope, as it will for poor Tom there— I'm sorry, Tom, but if you swing for this business, you have to

thank your friend Lance Madoc, *alias* Amos Beyvin, for it, and anyway, you understand, don't you, my good man? that if you get convicted for this—this—er—accident, I shall be obliged to withdraw my candidature for Miss Mazeline's hand—very reluctantly, of course—but I should have to draw the line at marrying the sister of a murderer."

"You filthy reptile—you abominable, miserable cur—" Lance had his fist up. Another moment would have seen Mr. Oskar Horfman in the humiliating position of sprawling on the floor in his own house, kicked and thrashed as he undoubtedly deserved to be. But Mr. Horfman was nothing if not self-possessed and agile. Before Lance had time to strike out, Mr. Horfman's finger was on the electric bell immediately behind him.

Lance fortunately had sufficient presence of mind left to pull himself together before there came a knock at the door, and a respectful voice inquired: "Did you ring, sir?"

"Yes," Mr. Horfman said coolly; "bring another syphon, will you?"

When the man had gone, he indulged in his habitual sneering laugh.

"Assault and battery wouldn't do any good in this house, Mr. Beyvin," he said; "they never do any good really, as I've had occasion to remark to you before now. Am I to understand from your pugnacious attitude that you object to my ever suggesting that I might, under certain circumstances, refuse the honour of Miss Mazeline's hand . . . ? A few minutes ago you

were threatening me with all sorts of dire penalties if I did not break off my engagement. There's no pleasing you. Is there?"

While Mr. Horfman delivered himself of this speech Lance's attitude underwent a visible change. He no longer looked like a man with a resolute will, who was determined to carry that will through, whatever might be the consequences to himself: he looked now like a man who is wavering at the cross-roads of destiny, weighing the pros and cons of taking the right turn or the left. There was a frown—a heavy frown of brooding thought between his eyes. He no longer looked at his enemy: rather avoided his glance, as if the thoughts which forced themselves into the very mirrors of his mind were making him feel not only irresolute, but ashamed.

Mr. Horfman, who prided himself on his knowledge of human nature, was quick enough to notice this change. The sneer which had not left his face all through the interview became more pronounced and also more malicious. The longer Lance remained silent, the more steadily did he avoid Mr. Horfman's glance, the more pleased and urbane did the latter appear, in spite of his sneer. He went up to an elegant Italian mirror which hung in the recess beside the mantel-piece and very carefully rearranged his tie, and with his well-groomed hand smoothed down his slightly ruffled hair. Through the mirror he was observing Lance Madoc.

As for Tom, he was not worth observing; he was just a limp rag of humanity, more malleable than a lump of putty. He had drunk far more

than was good for him, and now that events appeared to be calming down, that he was no longer bullied by Madoc or goaded by Horfman, he appeared content to sink into a bibulous sleep.

From a remote part of the house there came the sound of a gong.

"Ah!" said Mr. Horfman genially, "the luncheon gong. I shan't be sorry."

He turned on his heel, facing Lance Madoc once more.

"Now, Mr. Madoc," he said pleasantly, "is it to be peace or war?"

"I don't think I quite know what you mean," Lance said shamefacedly.

"Are you still determined to get the lot of us in the soup? or are you getting more reasonable?"

"Since you put it that way, Mr. Horfman . . ."

"Why, of course I put it that way. My good man, what does it all amount to? A question of jealousy on your part, which I find quite natural and can easily forgive now I know who you are, and that you were at one time engaged to the lady in question. Of course you hate me for cutting in, and you would like to sweep me out of the way. Unfortunately for you, you can't do that now, without yourself taking the long, long road back to Dartmoor. As to that, you say you don't care. I'm to do my damndest and so on. Good! But you see, there's Tom! and there's Tom's sister. If you bring the police nosing about this business, you may do me an injury—perhaps; but you most certainly will send Tom to the gallows and his sister crazy with

grief. If you hit me, I hit back, and as I say, I have witnesses. Now do you understand?"

"I think I do, Mr. Horfman," Lance said meekly.

"You do? That's capital. Have a drink?"

"No, thanks."

"Stay to lunch?"

"Thank you, Mr. Horfman. I think, if you don't mind, I'd like to go home now and think everything out."

"That's right. You think it all out, Mr. Madoc. I'm sure we can come to an amicable understanding together, you and I. All you want to remember is that—naturally—if I marry Miss Mazeline, Tom will be perfectly safe from me, and I can guarantee that my friends will hold their tongues—but if there's any interference with my engagement, why then the lot of us must flounder in the soup together. Now you've got that, haven't you?"

"I think I have."

"And I think that Tom and I between us can persuade Miss Mazeline, under the circumstances, to consent to an absolutely quiet wedding before the registrar. She will agree with me, I'm sure, that it would be best to hurry on the date—that is, of course, if she's not interfered with."

"Of course," Lance said conclusively. "Well! I'll be going now, I think."

"If you really won't stay——"

"Thanks, no. What about you, Tom?"

Tom, at sound of the gong, had roused himself from his slumbers. Seeing Madoc and Horf-

man in such amicable conversation had the effect of gradually sobering him. For the moment, at any rate, the quantity of whisky he had consumed had obscured the recollection of the terrible events of this morning. He hadn't forgotten, but he viewed the immediate past with a modified sense of horror. And his was one of those natures which are essentially optimistic. So long as it was possible to shelve, either the discussion of an unpleasant topic or the consequences of a serious act, Tom would persuade himself that everything would come out all right in the end. Other people might suffer for his misdeeds, other people might and did worry, but if only he was made comfortable, he didn't care. Thus he had acquiesced without a pang of remorse in his sister's engagement to a man whom he knew to be a blackguard; it had shelved for an indefinite time the tiresome subject of those forged cheques. He could carry on without anything unpleasant happening to himself and easily persuaded himself that Fay would get on quite comfortably with Horfman, and would even enjoy the life and luxury of Sans Souci.

And so it was now. While Madoc threatened to interfere, and there was talk of police and the hangman's rope, Tom was nothing but a rag of humanity, filled with horror at what he had done, mad with rage against the man who had been his evil counsellor, terror-stricken at the consequences. But the moment that Madoc and Horfman appeared to understand one another, the moment there was talk of luncheon and of thinking things over quietly. Tom was like a dog who

has been half-drowned, with coat so wet that it couldn't even begin to shake itself, and who is suddenly wrapped in a blanket, wiped first, then thrust in the sun, when, of course, a good shake sends the water flying in all directions, leaving the coat warm and dry. Tom felt just like that. Figuratively speaking, he had felt himself drowning in an ocean of horror and fear; he had been so heavily weighed down by terror that he just allowed himself to drift—if necessary out of life. Then, all of a sudden, he found himself wrapped in a blanket of calm speeches and amiable intercourse. Horfman was genial, Lance Madoc ceased to preach, luncheon was on the table.

"What about you, Tom?" Madoc had asked quite simply and naturally.

Well! Tom was going to have luncheon with Mr. Horfman, and after that——

"We'll drive over to Bootham," Mr. Horfman said with becoming seriousness. "Tom will have to break the news to his sister."

Lance made no comment on this. But a moment or two later he said:

"What about your mother?"

Again it was Mr. Horfman who, turning to Tom, put in blandly:

"You can have the large Lincoln if you like, Tom. Say you start about three this afternoon and sleep at the Crow's Nest to-night, then go on to Lake Louise. Will that suit you?"

"Thanks, old man, that'll do nicely."

"Come and have lunch with me, Tom, won't you?" Lance suggested.

"Where?"

"Oh, anywhere in Glamisdale you like to name."

Tom laughed good-humouredly. "Thanks, old man," he said, "but I prefer Mr. Horfman's cook."

After which Lance Madoc was able to take his leave, and the other two went arm-in-arm in to lunch.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter XVII

LANCE called for Blue Eyes at the hospital after that, and she was, fortunately, able to go out to lunch with him. They found a quiet corner in the restaurant of the hotel, and as soon as lunch was ordered, Lance told Blue Eyes what had happened; not everything, of course—not Tom's participation in the tragedy, nor did he mention Oskar Horfman; but he told her of Mr. van Menterghem's terrible death, and that Tom was going to Bootham and then on to Lake Louise to break the news to his sister first and then to his mother.

"Miss Mazeline will feel it terribly," Nurse Browne said, her round blue eyes full of sympathetic tears. "Not that she was very fond of her stepfather—they hadn't much in common—but she has had so much to put up with lately, she is not really fit to bear much more."

"She's had a great deal to put up with," Lance said, "but I didn't think you knew."

Blue Eyes gave a quaint little laugh. "You couldn't live long," she said, "with Mrs. van Menterghem and not know things——"

"Yes, I know, but I shouldn't have thought that Miss Mazeline——"

"Oh! she didn't say anything to me. But one can't help putting two and two together."

Lance was silent for a moment or two, then he said abruptly and like a man pleading for his very life:

"Blue Eyes, don't let her marry that black-guard."

"My dear," she retorted in her practical way, and a little astonished at his earnestness, "how can I prevent it?"

"Something's got to be done——"

"Granted— But what?"

"Can't you get her away somewhere—or——"

It was all very silly and hopeless. Of course she couldn't do anything, and said so, and finally she added: "Besides, if I've guessed right, there's something to do with Mr. Tom about this marriage."

"Why doesn't he die?" Lance muttered. "So many nice and useful people die every day——"

"Those kind never do die," Blue Eyes rejoined ungrammatically, but very decidedly: "unless some other blackguard goes and murders them."

Lance threw her a quick glance. "You are right, Blue Eyes; someone ought to murder that swine. It wouldn't be murder, anyway."

"My dear," Blue Eyes protested, "I didn't say that."

"No. But it would be a solution, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," she said coolly, "I suppose so."

She looked at him keenly, curiously, thought he looked thin and harassed, didn't like the look in his eyes, or the feel of his hand—and told him so.

"Oh, I'm all right," he said in the impatient way men have when they think that women are fussing over their health. Then he harked back on the former topic.

"It would be best," he said, "for Fay—I mean Miss Mazeline—to go away for a bit, wouldn't it? Then if anything happened to that black-guard——"

It was Blue Eyes' turn to be impatient. "My dear boy," she said, "do eat your lunch and talk like a reasonable being. In all probability nothing will happen to Mr. Horfman. I suppose that the wedding will be postponed owing to this awful tragedy, but even so——"

"That wedding is not going to take place, Blue Eyes. You may take it from me."

She shrugged. "How are you going to prevent it?"

"That's my affair."

"I'm afraid you'd have to reckon with Mr. Tom first, even if you could do something—which you certainly can't."

"I know that. About Tom, I mean. But that's my affair too, Blue Eyes. You get Miss Mazeline out of the way first. I'll guarantee to do the rest."

"How do you mean, get Miss Mazeline out

of the way? How can I get her out of the way?"

"Can't you get her to go away with you somewhere?"

"My dear, how can I?"

"Well, you could persuade her—couldn't you? for the sake of her health."

"What nonsense! She wouldn't listen to me. Besides——"

"Well?"

"Besides, you know very well that she's determined to marry Mr. Horfman for some reason which has to do with Mr. Tom. I don't know exactly what the reason is, but I can guess. Mrs. van Menterghem blurted out all sorts of things about his gambling and, as I say, I put two and two together."

"That's just why——"

"Oh!" Blue Eyes said a little irritably, if anyone so kind and so placid could ever be called irritable, "don't let's go all over that silly ground so often. You can no more prevent Miss Mazeline marrying Mr. Horfman than you can fly. And that's that. Now for goodness sake finish your lunch, as I must be back at the hospital before three o'clock."

He finished his lunch—such as it was—in silence. When they were both sipping their coffee he said suddenly and quite seriously:

"If I can persuade Miss Mazeline to come and stay at my country house for a bit, will you come too?"

She stared at him, wide-eyed.

"Stay at your country house? What do you mean? Where is your country house?"

"On the edge of the wild."

"You've got a country house?" she reiterated, frowning. "You're pulling my leg."

"Not I. I've got a shack and a couple of sheds on the fringe of the wild. I've got a forest by way of a park, and luscious moss and scarlet willow and fire-grass by way of a lawn. From my doorstep I have the most gorgeous view over the Rockies: on a clear day I can see the Crow's Nest and Mount Turtle and The Three Sisters. I can watch the sun rise above the foot-hills and see the sunset glow over the snow-capped heights. It is lovely, Blue Eyes, really."

Now he seemed more like the real Lance, with sparkling eyes full of the joy of living. He had lifted Mr. Micawber up on his knees and was feeding him with bits of buttered roll.

"You'll make that dog sick," she said, and then went on quickly: "Tell me some more—about your shack. How long have you had it?"

"Ages."

"Why didn't you tell me about it before?"

"It wasn't anyhow fit for you to visit."

"Never mind. I'd have liked to have known."

"Why?" He looked astonished. "Why should you have wanted to know?"

Blue Eyes didn't reply to his question, but the next moment she said abruptly:

"You really will make that dog sick."

Mr. Micawber was allowed to jump down. Then the waiter was called, the bill paid. It was time to go.

"You didn't answer my question, Blue Eyes," Lance said at last.

"Which one?"

"If I can persuade Miss Mazeline to come to the shack, will you come too?"

"You know you are talking nonsense," she retorted; "she won't come."

"Will you if she does?" he insisted.

"I don't know if I could get leave," she objected.

"Blue Eyes, you must——" he pleaded.

"Why must I?"

He took hold of her hand—no one was looking—her firm, practical hand which had so often ministered to his bodily wants.

"You will come, Blue Eyes," he pleaded again.

"It's all so silly," she said with a serene smile; "you haven't asked Fay yet."

"Promise," he insisted, "that if she says 'Yes'—That's all I ask—promise."

"You aren't half obstinate, are you?" she said with a funny little laugh. "You must be wanting—one of us to come—badly."

"Blue Eyes!" he pleaded.

And she, laughing, with a funny little shrug, promised.

Later on, after he had seen her back to the hospital gates, she watched him while he walked away down the street with Mr. Micawber at his heels. A quaint little sigh broke through her lips and the corners of her mouth gave an ominous little quiver. Quickly she put up her hand and one of her fingers caught the drop of moisture which had fallen from her eyes.

"Don't be such a fool, Lena Browne," she said to herself, and hastened back to her work.

EMMA never quite understood why she should suddenly be made to work so hard. In the old days at Crum's she certainly had the daily climb down from the shack in the morning and up again at night, but she didn't mind that—it had been a matter of twenty miles, mostly at foot-pace, with no load but her master, and all day and all night to get over it, and a long rest during week-ends. Since the move to Bootham the work had been more erratic—the climb to the shack rather infrequent, as it was so very much longer; then there were those silly colts to teach, and other still more silly beasts to round up. Emma didn't mind any of that— Nor did she mind the present work. It was funny—that's all.

Mr. Micawber, on the other hand, liked the work. To begin with, it gave him an opportunity of getting gloriously in everybody's way, of upsetting things in the dirtiest puddles of the road, of seeing them roll out of reach down an incline, and generally fussing round till something most important would get forgotten. As for his poor, harassed master, surely he should be thankful to have a dog rounding up things for him and seeing everybody safely on the way.

And then again, Mr. Micawber enjoyed the rides on Mr. Bagley's cart; crowning the things that were bestowed in it, and incidentally upsetting them so that they had to be stacked up all over again. And such an amazing lot of things they were too! Mr. Bagley drove them out in his car from Glamisdale to the point where the moun-

tain path meets the road, half a mile or so to the north of Glade Wood. Here Lance Madoc, with Emma, was waiting for them, and the things were then taken out of the cart and stowed for the most part on the back of one of Mr. Bagley's nags; but Emma, too, had to have her share—and that was what she could not understand. Why so many things to carry up there? It had never been done before. And Mr. Micawber, with one ear cocked and the other flapping in the breeze, went on fussing round and directing operations, and turned one brown reproachful eye on his master whenever Lance uttered an exasperated: "Here! get out of the way, you idiot!"

Idiot indeed!

Then when everything was safely stowed away on the backs of the two patient beasts, Mr. Bagley touched his hat and asked: "Anything else, Mr. Madoc?"

Lance replied: "I'll know better to-morrow, Bagley, thank you." After which the men bade one another: "S'long!" and the cart, looking so funny and lopsided with the one nag on one side of the pole, went creaking back along the road to Glamisdale. Mr. Micawber had an extra ride in the cart, for a quarter of a mile or so, until Mr. Bagley caught sight of him and turned him out with a: "You'll have to hurry, or you'll get left behind." But Mr. Micawber didn't get left behind, he just padded back along the road, on his short stumps, turned up the mountain path and overtook the caravan—which consisted of his master, Emma and Mr. Bagley's nag—at the usual resting-place, known as Amos' Rest. Of course, he had an-

other ride after that, on Emma's back, because twelve miles, mostly uphill, and some of it very steep, was too much for his short stumps. He managed to make himself quite comfortable amidst the funny lot of things which Emma was carrying: a couple of cushions, a pair of curtains, a fleecy blanket, a parcel of linen and some china. Mr. Micawber chose the cushions by way of a saddle first, and later on transferred himself to a decorated china basin.

Mr. Bagley's nag had a folding bedstead to carry, with mattress complete, also a folding deck-chair, some books and a table. He took things more for granted than did Emma, being used to such errands. And the caravan, thus loaded to capacity, slowly wound its way up the trail to the lonely shack on the edge of the wild. Then, when the party was up there, life became altogether of a revolutionary character. Apart from the fact that Mr. Bagley's nag had to be accommodated and entertained in Emma's shed, all sorts of curious things happened and were done. Sunday came in between, but it was not the day of rest that it had always been; nor even a day devoted to sport. On this occasion it just was a day like any other day, with work for everybody. Emma had to haul up some timber, and Mr. Micawber was compelled to watch his master doing hard work with saw and hammer and pincers, also with brushes and brooms. There was a partition through the middle of the shack, forming two rooms; the communicating door between the rooms had long since been broken. This now was mended and the partition well scrubbed. The

floors were thoroughly washed, which meant that pails of water could always be relied on for getting upset; also shelves were cut and fixed in convenient positions. The next day saw the fixing of curtains over the window of each room and across the corner to keep the dust off the shelves; it also saw the new camp bedstead set up by the side of Lance's old one in the inner room, a square of carpet laid down on both floors, and the folding chair adorned with cushions. And the day after that there was the journey back to Glamisdale—a rest for Emma, but none for Mr. Micawber, because he had to go round shopping with his master. When the journey up the trail was once more undertaken, Emma did indeed carry a miscellaneous lot of things: provisions of all sorts—tea, sugar, condensed milk, “Quaker Oats,” and sardines, jam and marmalade; but that was not all—there was a dressing-case—a lady's dressing-case—which contained silver-backed brushes and comb, a box filled with powder—face powder!—a lip-stick, which the young lady at the drug-store had especially recommended as being the kind she always used herself—a night-gown—crêpe-de-Chine—recommended for a similar reason by the young lady in the drapery store—and a pair of bedroom slippers. Had such things ever been taken up a mountain trail before? thought Emma.

However, after this second journey, she was at last able to enjoy a well-earned rest. Mr. Bagley's nag being no longer there, she could have her shed to herself, while the others, her master and Mr. Micawber, were still busy doing things in the

shack. Well! let 'em, thought Emma, as she quietly munched her corn. For one thing, Mr. Micawber considered it his duty to fight his master over the two cushions. He looked upon them—and rightly too—as his perquisites. What were cushions for but to be worried by any self-respecting sporting dog who, with one flight of imagination, would transform them into rabbits and chase them up and down, inside and out, till all the stuffing was out of them—or nearly. So Mr. Micawber, being a self-respecting sporting dog, took the better of the two cushions and with it made for the door. Lance caught sight of him at the very moment when first the cushion became a rabbit, when its neck was wrung, its body shaken, pounded against the stony ground, and its white fluffy insides began to come out.

This was one of the rare occasions when Mr. Micawber got a whipping, which he greatly resented, for he didn't think he had done wrong. Deeply hurt, he retired into the shack and, muddy paws and all, deposited himself on the new bed-spread—hence another whipping!

Truly the ways of dog owners were un-understandable. And now, after these days of arduous labour for everybody, peace came at last. Lance was able to sleep that night with the feeling that what he had done was good. There were curtains and there were cushions; there was a blanket on the new bedstead, and embroidered sheets, and frilled pillow-cases over the pillows; there were carpets and there were shelves; there was flowered china on an improvised washstand and a complete tea-set on an occasional table. There was a

primitive cupboard replete with things to eat. There was a provision of kindling wood and hard logs in a shed outside—in fact there were so many things there—too numerous and varied to mention—that Lance couldn't think of anything else to bring up here from Glamisdale. It was rather sad—as anything absolutely final always is—and when he closed the door of the shack the following morning and he, Emma and Mr. Micawber started to go down the trail, they, all three of them, felt in a chastened mood.

“When next we come up here—eh, old man?” Lance said to Mr. Micawber, who, unfortunately, winked one eye where he should have sighed—being quite sure in his own mind that something pleasant would turn up for him when next he was up there.

The room at Glamisdale seemed dreary and sordid after those last few days in the wild; the first gleam of joy came in the afternoon, when Lance went round to the children's hospital and saw Blue Eyes, and she consented to come out and lunch with him. There were a thousand and one questions he wanted to ask her. He knew about the inquest and the verdict: “Accidental death,” because it was all in the local papers, which he had bought that very morning. He knew that the jury and the coroner, and everyone in Glamisdale for a matter of that, had expressed great sympathy for the family of the deceased, and most particularly for young Mr. Mazeline, who had been an eye-witness to the terrible tragedy, and himself had narrowly escaped being burnt alive like his unfortunate stepfather. No blame whatever had

been attached to him. He had described the burning car like a gigantic fiery furnace, out of which he had escaped as if by a miracle. To return to it and try to render assistance to the unfortunate man was absolutely impossible. It would have meant courting certain death and doing no good.

Mr. Oskar Horfman, the wealthy owner of Sans Souci, and two friends, Mr. William Ward and Mr. John Harrap, also gave evidence. They had arrived on the scene when the car was still blazing, and could only confirm Mr. Mazeline's story. Mr. Horfman had at once driven back to Glamisdale for the police. All three gentlemen declared that nothing could possibly have been done to save the unfortunate man entrapped in his own car, with the flames round him like a roaring furnace.

All this Lance had duly read in the local papers, the tragic event being the sensation of the neighbourhood. What he did not know was the course of the inner tragedy behind that which had been made public. Close on a week had gone by since he had spoken to anyone. Tom had apparently run up to Lake Louise and come back for the inquest. But Lance had no news of Fay.

"Have you seen her?" he asked as soon as he had Blue Eyes comfortably settled before the kind of luncheon that she liked. Yes: Blue Eyes had seen Fay. She had spent the week-end with her at Bootham.

"I managed to get leave—and she wanted company," Blue Eyes said. Lance didn't ask how Fay was, or how she looked. What was the good

of asking? He knew well enough that Fay was miserable—desperately miserable—not so much on account of the death of her stepfather and the breaking up of the new home, but because the tragic news, coming on the top of everything, must have brought her very near to the end of her tether.

“What about the wedding?”—Lance did ask that, but Blue Eyes couldn’t tell him anything definite.

“I’ve an idea that they’ll be married very quietly—and very soon. Mrs. van Menterghem has had another nervous breakdown. Fortunately her sister is with her at Lake Louise, and Tom only came up for the inquest and is going back almost at once to be with his mother.”

“Why doesn’t Fay go up there?”

“She did go, along with Tom. But she’s had to come back here. Someone has got to be at Bootham to look after things, and Tom simply won’t have anything to do with business, so his sister has got to. It seems there’s some trouble about a rather large sum of money which belonged to some customers of Mr. van Menterghem, and which he apparently had in his pocket at the time of the accident. It was all burnt, of course.”

“Of course,” Lance said, and he thought of the pocket-book—and the newspaper cuttings which he had last seen in the hands of Mr. Oskar Hofman.

“But what makes you think,” he asked, “that the wedding will be soon?”

“Something that Fay said—I can’t tell you

exactly—I'm so sorry for her, poor thing——”

“You didn't suggest——?”

“I did. But, of course, she said ‘No.’ She couldn't possibly get away, that's what she said. Then there's a new man coming to help look after the farm until it is sold. The executors of Mr. van Menterghem are seeing to all that. I don't think he has left a great deal of money, and it seems that most of it goes to a son of his by his first marriage.”

She went on talking—telling him things about Mr. van Menterghem's affairs—about the business at Glamisdale, and about the farm. Lance listened with half an ear. It was only when Blue Eyes mentioned Mr. Horfman that he seemed to wake up and listen.

“He runs over every day to see Fay,” Blue Eyes had said; “so I understand.”

“And Fay sees him?”

“Yes. Apparently she does. For a few moments only. The housemaid, Julia—you remember her?—told me that she has never seen an engaged couple less spoony.”

“I suppose you don't realize,” Lance cried out suddenly, almost fiercely, “that she—that Fay—that that poor girl is breaking her heart?”

“Of course I know that, my dear boy,” Blue Eyes said very gently, “but we are both of us helpless in the matter—aren't we?”

There the matter ended for the moment. Blue Eyes was so troubled about Lance that she hardly knew how to question him: he had all the healthy young animal's horror of being “fussed over.” She knew that, and yet evidently he needed rest

and care—and above all sympathy. She could read his thoughts well enough, not all of them, but some. She guessed, with an unconquerable pain in her poor little heart, how ardent, how wild was his desire to straighten things out for Fay, and how bitter must his hatred be for the man who not only was taking from him the woman whom he loved, but who was utterly unworthy. Blue Eyes, of course, didn't know much of the inner history of the past few weeks—all she knew was a few scraps let fall here and there by the garrulous Mrs. van Menterghem, but what she had guessed was pretty near the truth.

Only, alas! she was entirely helpless.

Lance, of course, had only the one idea in his brain—Fay. When he did talk it was of nothing else; when he sat silent, he was obviously brooding over it all. He reminded Blue Eyes of her promise to come and stay at the shack.

"I don't suppose there's much chance of that now," she said.

"Never mind about that," he retorted. "You did promise."

"I know I did, and I will come when you want me— Anyway, I would like to see your country house."

"Anyway"— What a world of possibilities—hideous, horrible possibilities—did that word contain. Blue Eyes was not aware of that. She had just said "Anyway" as anyone would say: "if the weather's fine," or "if I can get a holiday." She didn't realize that "anyway" in this case meant: "if Fay can't or won't come too," or "if Fay is married sooner than we expect."

Fay married to Oskar Horfman—! The vilest brute that ever defiled God's earth——!
Fay!!!

*Blue Eyes and Grey**Chapter XIX*

LANCE went over to Bootham that afternoon. There was no sign of Mr. Horfman's car anywhere, so he walked boldly into the house and wandered from room to room in search of Fay. She was nowhere to be seen. On the stairs he met the housemaid: a pretty girl with whom he had always been on pleasant terms. She had liked Mr. Madoc from the first and had been quite a friend of Nurse Browne.

"Miss Mazeline?" Lance asked.

"Why! if it is not Mr. Madoc," the girl said with a little giggle. "How are you, Mr. Madoc?"

"Very well, thanks, Julia. But tell me, where can I find Miss Mazeline?"

"Have you looked in the garden?"

"Not yet."

"If she's not there you'll find her in the stables or up in the corral. Poor lady! she don't look much like a wedding, does she?"

"Like a wedding?"

"Why yes! Didn't you know?"

"No. What?"

"They are to be married the day after tomorrow—at the registry office—no one was to know a word about it, except me—for I'm doing her packing for her—and——"

The girl was still talking—giving voluble explanations—the wedding was to be private because of the mourning— But already Lance was down the stairs, across the hall and out on the verandah, hearing nothing except the words “wedding” and “the day after to-morrow,” which still reverberated in his ear.

First he scoured the garden, then the stables, and finally he wandered out to the corral, where he found her watching the two colts—his colts they were called—being put through their paces by a couple of men. Fay was outside the fence, leaning on it, with her hands clasped. The soft earth had deadened the sound of his footsteps and he was quite close to her before she saw him.

“No,” he said with a genial smile, “you can’t run away. Wherever you went I should overtake you.”

He put out his hand quite simply and naturally, and after a second’s hesitation she shook hands with him.

“The colts are getting on fine,” he said, and leaned on the fence beside her. She said: “Yes! aren’t they? They are perfect darlings. I should have liked to keep one for a saddle-horse. His action is just perfect.”

“Why don’t you?”

She gave a little shrug. “The ranch is to be sold as it stands, and——”

“And you are going to be married the day after to-morrow. Is that it?”

“Who told you?” she asked.

“Never mind who told me. It is true, then?”

“Why . . . yes!”

"You might have let me know sooner."

"It will be very quiet—at the registry office—only Tom——"

"Tom still at Sans Souci?"

"Yes. He came down for the inquest; but he'll go back to Mother directly after—my wedding."

"And where will you go—directly after your wedding?"

"To Sans Souci, I suppose."

"To Sans . . . my God!"

Apparently she did not hear this exclamation—this cry almost, which might have been uttered by a wounded animal. She was watching the colts: the men dismounting, the two pretty creatures being led out of the corral.

"They are doing splendidly, Owen," she called out to one of the men.

"Yes! ain't they, miss! Will you have a ride later on? Pick-me-up, he's just lovely and fresh."

"Yes, I will. When it gets a little cooler. Will you bring Pick-me-up round, please, Owen?"

"Yes, miss!"

The men had gone with the colts, but Fay had not moved, and Lance, beside her, could see her delicate profile silhouetted against the sky. Her wide-brimmed hat shaded her eyes, but nose and chin were in full sunlight, and there was no mistaking the droop of the mouth, and the pathetic quiver of the lips— The wedding— The day after to-morrow— Heavens alive!

"Don't do it, Fay," Lance cried abruptly. "My God, it's an outrage—you can't——"

She turned her face to him. Her eyes looked tired beyond expression, with dark rims below

them, and the lids drooping as if with the weight of unshed tears.

"Don't tease me, Amos," she said with a quaint, pathetic little catch in her throat. "You know that I've got to go through with it. What's the use——?"

"I don't believe that worm would do anything, even if——"

"Are you such a poor reader of character as all that?" Fay retorted more coolly, "or are you still trying to tease me? or do you suppose that I don't know—everything?"

"Everything? Great God, you don't mean ——?"

She nodded.

"Who told you?"

"Mr. Horfman first——"

"The unmitigated coward——"

"Then I asked Tom—he didn't deny it— Seriously, Amos, I nearly put an end to myself then, when I knew that Tom—my little brother— was a——"

She swallowed her tears, resolutely, valiantly; and for a minute or two there was silence between them. When she spoke again, she no longer looked at Lance, but turned her sweet, tired, wan face towards the far-distant outposts of the Rockies, whose ice-clad heads glistened in the crystalline atmosphere like fairy strongholds, so remote that the sorrows and the passions of men could never reach their heights or mar their glacial beauty.

"Fortunately I was sane enough," she went on after a little while, "to think of Mother—it would

have been yet another blow for her—if I went, I mean—and it seems that her nervous system could not stand another strain. Then, of course, there is still Tom—if I was not there, he would remain entirely in the hands of that man—and God only knows what would happen then——”

If anyone had told Lance Madoc that he would stand by one day and hear Fay—Fay!—talk of putting an end to herself, he would just have laughed, because the very thought of it would have seemed to him too preposterous for words. All round him the world was exquisitely beautiful; the aspen and maple in full leaf, the meadows rich with ripening corn, a chorus of birds sending their gay and piping note up to the azure of the sky; peace and beauty everywhere, with the scent of pine-woods wafted down from the wild and the soft summer breeze playing with the weighted heads of the gold-green corn. And Fay! the most exquisite product of this fair New World, she was the one to suffer and to weep; for her this fair earth would for ever be polluted through contact with all that was most foul, most vicious under the sky. And her resignation, her acquiescence in it all was the greatest tragedy of all in this abysmal outrage.

“They—I mean Mr. Horfman and Tom—told me that you knew everything, Amos, or I shouldn’t have said anything——”

“Yes,” Lance said, “I do know—about everything.”

“Then you do understand the position I am in?” she went on, a curious note of pleading in her voice—just as if he did not understand—just as if her sublime sacrifice for a worthless cause

needed advocacy before the man who would have kissed her feet in adoration.

"I understand," Lance murmured, "that you are the most wonderful——"

"No! I'm nothing of the sort," she said with a wan little smile; "but I couldn't let my own brother——"

Lance longed to say, "I don't see why not?" but this would have been more than cruel, it would have been futile too, and probably caused her to withdraw into her shell, to become once more the cold and unapproachable Fay, whom he had once compared to the Northern Lights in their distant and icy aloofness. So what he said was:

"Tom was a fool, and a criminal fool. But there's nothing really vicious in him. It was that blackguard that goaded him into it. Horfman was scared by Mr. van Menterghem; and just like the devil he is, he was too great a coward to commit a crime, so he set a trap for Tom, into which the wretched boy just fell headlong. But why should you be sacrificed——?"

"Only because Mr. Horfman has got Tom in the hollow of his hand. Don't you suppose that if I'd seen any sort of a way out— He put the knife at my throat with this—and he will denounce Tom to the police as the—as the murderer of——"

"Don't say it, Fay!"

"And there are two witnesses, it seems, who——"

"Liars and cowards——"

"Perhaps, but you see, unfortunately, it happens to be true. Tom did——"

She paused for a moment and then said softly: "I have not spoken about it with anyone before—there was no one with whom I could—I've never really looked the thing in the face—except by myself—until now."

"You poor—poor darling kid. No, don't look scared," Lance said quite calmly. "I'm not going to make a fool of myself as I did that time in the garden. Things didn't seem quite so—so desperate as they do now. Fay, listen to me. I know that you don't love me—not really love me, I mean—I forfeited your love a long time ago, and now I'm only an escaped convict, as Mr. Horfman justly says; but since you like me well enough to tell me your trouble, will you trust me just a little further? Come away with me, Fay! The world is so jolly big! Let's go and hide in it somewhere together. I swear to God that you'll always be for me the most sacred thing on earth; that I'll just work for you, and cherish you, without asking anything from you in return. Come away with me, Fay! Let's forget all this misery, all this dirty business, somewhere where we'll just have the birds and beasts for company. We'll find a desert island somewhere, trust me—and we'll build ourselves a little house, and we'll have horses and dogs, things that never round on you and never let you down. Fay! I've got a little shack 'way up there in the wild. We could hide there until we've decided what to do— Nobody would know where we were and what we did—for I've blazed a trail that no one knows anything about, and we'll——"

She had allowed him to talk on—just the wild

talk of a boy—men, even those who have lived and suffered, are only boys, most of them, after all. Amos Beyvin would always be a boy, not seeing further than his desires, not reckoning on anything but his will. She even allowed him to take her hands, to hold them tight while he talked in that eager, excited way.

"A pretty dream, Amos," Fay said softly, when he paused for want of breath.

"Make it real, Fay!" he said. "Come away—now!"

She said the one word: "Tom!" and he let go her hands. The eager words were stilled: through his set teeth there came a fierce and comprehensive curse.

"You see what a wild dream it is, don't you?" Fay said.

"It wouldn't be," he said involuntarily, "if you cared——"

"It would have to be a big, big love, my dear," she retorted, speaking very slowly and measuring every word, "that would allow a woman to send her own brother to the gallows in order to secure her own happiness."

"You're right there—you poor little kid," Lance said softly; "it would have to be a big, big love."

Somehow after this there was nothing more to say. At least, so it seemed to Lance. Fay said: "I shall have to be getting back." And Lance seemed to accept this as final. They walked across the meadows towards the house. The afternoon sun threw elongated shadows athwart their path, and from the fields close by there came the soft

swishing sound of the corn bending to the breeze. A blackbird was piping in the old maple tree, and Mr. Micawber put up a rabbit or two and gave little yaps of delight when they scooted in all directions. In the blue ether the tiny, fleecy clouds were just slightly tinged with gold.

"I'll say good-bye now," Fay said, when they reached the garden gate.

"Not good-bye," Lance retorted; "I'll see you the day after to-morrow."

"No, don't do that——" she blurted out involuntarily.

"Do let me," he pleaded, "just to say good-bye."

"No—no——"

"I'll come quite early, before people are about—I know of a jolly little car I can borrow—Come for a run with me—the day after to-morrow, in the early morning—It'll be the last time——"

"No, Amos—really."

"I promise I won't make a fool of myself—and, you know, Fay, that after that we shall probably never meet again—or at any rate——"

She was wavering—shook her head to imply a "No," but a look in her eyes encouraged Lance to say:

"Well! I'll come, anyway—the mornings are so perfect just now—and you can't call it unreasonable for me just to want to see the last of you."

"Well!" she said at last, "we'll see."

LANCE had quite made up his mind to go over to Sans Souci that evening if he did not meet Mr. Horfman in Glamisdale. Fortunately he came across him in the bar of the hotel, virtuously sipping an orangeade in the company of two young men—obviously strangers from across the border.

"Ah! my dear Madoc," Mr. Horfman exclaimed as soon as Lance was through the swing doors, "what a delightful surprise! I haven't seen you for days and days! What have you been doing with yourself?"

"Been away on business, Mr. Horfman. How are you?"

"Splendid, thanks. Sit down, won't you? I wish I could offer you something more wholesome than orangeade——"

"I won't take anything, thanks, Mr. Horfman——"

"You are wise—beastly stuff this——"

But though Lance refused Mr. Horfman's offer of a drink, he accepted his invitation to sit down and meet his friends.

"Meet Mr. John K. Parker from Seattle," Mr. Horfman said, introducing the two young men, "and Mr. Neumarkt from Chicago. These gentlemen are dining with me to-night. Will you join us, Mr. Madoc?"

"Sorry; I can't. Not to-night, Mr. Horfman. But aren't you going to invite me to your wedding?"

"My wedding? Why, who told you?"

"Whoever it was," Lance said pleasantly, "they were well informed, weren't they?"

"Getting married, Mr. Horfman?" one of the young men asked.

"Why, yes! But it won't make any difference to Sans Souci, you know. You'll be just as welcome, Mr. Parker. And you, too, Mr. Neumarkt."

"That's kind of you to say so."

"When is your wedding, Mr. Horfman?"

"The day after to-morrow, half-past one—registry office over in Mount Street."

"Well! Good luck to ye."

"Thanks. But we'll drink to all that to-night at Sans Souci. Wish you could come, Mr. Madoc."

"So do I, but it can't be done. Never mind. I'll see you again; to-morrow, perhaps."

"Right. But I wish you'd tell me who told you about the whole thing. You won't? Then I'll make a shrewd guess. You've been getting round that pretty housemaid at Bootham. She had to know, because of helping the future Mrs. Horfman to get her things ready. Isn't that it?"

"Perhaps."

The future Mrs. Horfman—! God in Heaven——!

"Must you be going?" Mr. Horfman asked.

"Sure you won't come over to-night?"

He was most affable, was Mr. Horfman; saw Lance off the premises and in the street, took leave of him as if he were his dearest friend.

"Tom is staying with me, you know, Mr. Madoc," he said. "He didn't seem to want to go

to Bootham—didn't like to face his sister——”

“No?”

“Well,” Mr. Horfman remarked with a laugh, “you can hardly wonder, can you?— Anyway, after I am married to Fay he'll feel safe, and we can all of us go on just as if nothing had happened.”

“That's right, Mr. Horfman. Good of you to say so.”

“Don't mention it. I am that way, you know. I've knocked about the world a good deal and I take people as I find them. So long as they don't interfere with me—I mean, you needn't be afraid that I should split on you, unless——”

“I quite understand that, Mr. Horfman,” Lance said, “and I don't blame you. Well! I shall have to be going.”

“But you'll come and see us spliced?”

“If I can.”

“Half-past one, don't forget.”

“I shan't forget. S'long.”

Mr. Horfman went back to his friends, feeling at peace with the whole world. That fool Madoc was evidently not going to give any trouble. He had had nearly a week to think things over; had stewed over it, no doubt, and come to the conclusion that he had tied himself up into a knot, and that to keep quiet and give no trouble was obviously the safest policy. Perhaps he would be even wise enough to trek East or West presently for his own sake, and he, Oskar Horfman, wouldn't be averse to helping him financially towards settling down on a fruit farm in British Columbia, or something of that sort. And as to

that boy-and-girl attachment between Madoc and Fay, which the newspaper cuttings found in the old Dutchman's pocket-book had revealed, Mr. Horfman had no misgivings about that. It had all been broken off ages ago, long before Madoc's unpleasant affair in London with the police.

*Blue Eyes and Grey**Chapter XXI*

It certainly was a glorious morning!

Even Fay, who had spent a miserable night of dreary waking hours, of tears and regrets for the past, of terror for the future, couldn't help drawing a sigh of pleasure, almost exhilaration, when she wandered through the garden and out into the meadow, and filled her lungs with the sweet scent of young grass and dewy earth, which caressed her poor, throbbing head as with a kiss.

Her eyes, aching and hot, scanned the distance. Would Lance come?—and then she sighed—it would be so nice—and foolish?— Well! perhaps!—but so nice!—and then not really, really foolish. What harm could it do just to forget everything for a few hours, before——? She would get Lance to drive her over to the hills, where the first group of pine trees scattered their heady fragrance into the morning air, and where the wet moss was so cool, so yielding to the touch.

Without any definite volition of her own, Fay turned out of the meadow gate and wandered slowly up the road. There was nobody about.

When first she had gone through the garden she had seen some of the men in the distance, going out to the fields or to the corral. But on the road, no one. There was a slight breeze from the south, which brought on its wings the sound of the Glamisdale church bell. It struck six. And a moment or two later, a small car came in sight. It was Lance in the little two-seater, which he had borrowed in Glamisdale. At sight of Fay down went the accelerator and in a couple of minutes he had pulled up and jumped out of the car.

"You are a brick," he cried. "I didn't expect to see you so early— I just meant to hang about until you— I didn't think you would be up——"

Not only had she been up some time, she said, but she was ready for a run. She had on a small, close hat over her hair, and a smart coat and skirt. Lance was quite breathless with delight.

"I've got some hot coffee," he said, "in a thermos: some bread and butter and fresh raspberries and cream. We'll find a nice place in the wood and picnic. Shall we?"

She thought that a splendid idea.

"I must be back by ten o'clock," she said very seriously, when she was comfortably installed in the car.

Oh! what a lovely run! The small two-seater was a gem, running as smoothly as on an asphalt road. One scarcely felt the bumps, and the wind blew so deliciously right into one's face, bringing samples of odours, one more fragrant than the other—odour of pine wood and wet undergrowth, fragrance of roses and heliotrope from distant gardens, or ripening corn and acrid poppies. So

nice to be able to let the car rip, to fly along as if one was never, never going to stop. Here's a good side-road over the hills and right into the woods. Then a halt.

"Are you good for a bit of a climb? There's a lovely spot about a hundred yards up only—the very place for a picnic—" Lance said, and jumped out of the car, collected one or two things: a basket, a thermos, a rug.

"What about the car?" she asked.

"Oh, that will be all right. I know of an excellent hiding-place where no one can possibly see it."

It was not far, the ideal spot for a picnic. Just a stiff scramble up an incline between tall trees, and through a tangle of undergrowth.

"Let me carry something," Fay said.

"Well, you can carry the thermos, if you'll take my hand and let me haul you up."

That was quite a good suggestion, and the scramble was great fun. The chosen spot for the picnic was just ideal. They spread the rug and squatted on it. Never had coffee tasted so good, or raspberries and cream been so fresh. Lance had turned the little car behind a tangle of undergrowth, but even that precaution seemed unnecessary. There was nobody about.

"This little side-road isn't more than a woodland path really," Lance said, "and it leads nowhere—just makes a loop. You must have been this way before, surely——"

"I don't remember it. We didn't go out motor-ing much—Mother hates it—and we haven't been in the neighbourhood very long, you know."

"Do you feel like climbing just a little bit higher? There's such a wonderful view from a place close by I call Amos' Rest. We can strike the trail about four hundred yards from here, and this place is just off the trail."

"But what about the car?"

"When you are up there, nicely settled on the rug, I'll run back here and get the car and bring her round to the main road, where we can pick her up when you've had enough of the view."

"I must be back by ten o'clock," she insisted.

"It's only half-past seven now," he retorted.

"You're sure the car will be all right?"

"Quite sure. Do have a few more raspberries before we go."

"No, thank you," she said, laughing. "If I had any more I should have to hang them outside."

The crumbs and the last of the raspberries were left behind for the birds—so was the empty basket. Lance was for leaving the empty thermos also, but Fay wouldn't hear of it. She was a little worried about the car, but that seemed to be her only anxiety. For a moment—this brief, happy moment—she seemed to have wandered, all unconsciously, into the realm of forgetfulness! and in this realm she was just a child, care and thought-free, or else a sprite astray in these woods, with sparkling eyes and nimble feet and a voice rippling with laughter.

It was pretty stiff climbing on a ground slippery with pine-needles, and through undergrowth that was full of bramble; but it was all the more

fun getting through, and Lance kept on ahead and took her hand when she was in difficulties. All around the wood was alive with sounds—soft, mysterious sounds—the crackling of twigs, the flutter of leaves, the call of birds, the scuttling of tiny footsteps in the brush-wood. Inquisitive squirrels peeped round the trunks of stately pines and peered with tiny, beady eyes at these strange intrusive humans.

"Here's the trail!" Fay called out, brimming over with excitement, as they emerged suddenly on a path made distinct by trampled moss and low vegetation, and by damp earth which still bore the marks of a pony's hoofs.

"Instead of going out in the car," she said. "you ought to have brought darling Emma, and I might have come out on Pick-me-up. I didn't know there was this lovely trail here."

She had done her hundred miles' trail-riding, she explained, forded rivers, and clambered passes with the best of them. But that was a long way away in the Rockies. She had camped round fires, slept under tents, and seen the sun rise over the glaciers—but she didn't know there was such a lovely, mysterious trail as this one, so near to civilization, to main roads and to motor-cars.

"Did you blaze it, Amos?"

Yes! he had—only a part of it, though. Some poor devil had been here before him.

"Why do you say poor devil?" she asked. "Whoever he was, he was just a poet who loved the wild, and couldn't bear all the fussing, the toiling and moiling down below." She looked

upwards at the trail, as it wound and disappeared through the trees.

"Where does it lead to?" she asked.

"To the edge of the wild," he said. "Come a little higher, I want to show you——"

"But you said it was only four hundred yards. . . ."

"Well! so it is," he said, "as the swallow flies. Do come, it's just here."

"But the car," she insisted.

"Oh! Damn the car——" which, of course, made Fay laugh.

And now there they were on the plateau which he called Amos' Rest, and she stood beside him, looking out on the wonderful panorama, the toy world that went on down below: the toy city and toy chimneys, the tiny puffs of smoke, the fussy little vehicles on the narrow ribbon of road, and the dark, inky blots of trees upon the clear, crystalline background. She gave a little gasp of delight when first she stepped out of the semi-darkness of the woods into this sun-bathed space which dazzled the eye with its splendour. Lance held her by the elbow and pointed out to her the different points of vantage, the tiny dots which seemed so remote, so futile from up here, and yet which meant something of human life, something of human activity.

"Can you see that little bit of roof over there, that shines as if it were glass?—you see those trees, don't you? those big clumps—now to the right of that—do you see? that's Glamisdale railway station—you see the viaduct, of course— I wish there were a train coming—it is the funniest

thing in the world to see it puffing away down there as if for dear life——”

“Oh! I can see a little red car hurrying along just like a lady-bird—no bigger—it must be Laf-fan’s car—his is red— But I can’t see ours—I do hope it’s all right——”

She was a little breathless with the climbing, and also with excitement.

“Oh! I wish I had known of this place before, Amos; why didn’t you tell me?”

“She had taken off her small hat and allowed the wind to blow her fair hair all about her head. She turned her eager, bright face towards him—and met his eyes—such hungering eyes they were that all in a moment her gaiety fell away from her and she felt suddenly tired, and the pain which had gnawed at her heart for the past days and weeks came back with a greater agony.

“It’s time I went,” she murmured.

“Sit down a minute while I get the car.”

He spread the rug for her and she sat down. She thought he was going at once to fetch the car, but after a moment’s hesitation he squatted down beside her.

“Amos, I must be going,” she insisted.

“I know—we’ll go in a minute or two, but why not together, Fay?”

“Amos,” she protested, “you promised——”

“I know I did. I promised not to make a fool of myself. But I’m not a fool now, Fay: I am a very wise man, who has looked into the future and seen how utterly, utterly impossible the thing is which you want to do. Therefore I

ask you, Fay, and for the last time, will you come away with me——?”

Fay made an attempt to struggle to her feet.

“This is unfair and caddish, Amos. You brought me up here and you promised—and now you want to go all over that miserable ground again.”

“Fay! listen to me—just once more——”

“I will not listen to you——” the words came like a cry of intense pain, “and if you——”

She made another attempt to rise; Lance caught her by the arm.

“No, don’t go, Fay,” he said quietly. “Don’t be afraid. I won’t say anything more— Wait here for a few minutes, will you? I’ll be as quick as I can.”

He walked away without looking back once. Fay remained seated, bolt upright, her hands clasped between her knees; for a few seconds longer she heard at intervals the sound of Lance’s footsteps when they happened to strike a piece of protruding rock, and presently the crackling of twigs when he plunged once more into the undergrowth. Then nothing more.

From down below came sounds of life and activity: the shrill note of a railway whistle, the honk of a motor, but up here all was silence and beauty and peace. Fay looked about her as a dying man might look for the last time on the thing he loved best in the world: a heavy sob gripped her throat and like a poor wounded creature she fell upon her face and buried her head in her arms. Words did not come, only tears.

No cry rose beyond her heart, but the cry was one of soul agony:

"Dear God! he is quite right. The thing is impossible—utterly impossible—but dear, dear God, tell me what I am to do!"

.

"Fay!"

She looked up quickly and drew herself up with a jerk, very angry that she should have allowed Amos to see her like this—with wet eyes.

There he was already on the plateau. She had not heard him come. He had Emma with him, and Mr. Micawber was sitting on his haunches beside his master, his brown eyes fixed inquisitively upon Fay. He was not used to human company on Amos' Rest.

Fay dried her eyes as quickly as she could: she even contrived to smile: "Why, here's darling Emma!" she exclaimed, very much astonished, of course; "where in the world did she spring from?"

"Scramble up into the saddle," Lance said, ignoring the question; "she'll take you—down to the car."

"But where did she come from? And Mr. Micawber?"

"Never mind where they came from; they know where they are going, anyway. Do get on Emma's back, Fay. She's so lovely when she picks her way down a steep bank. I'd love you to try her."

Why not? Fay, though very much hampered by her skirt, allowed Lance to hoist her up into

the saddle; she shook herself into position, Emma being as still as a mouse, and there she sat as if perched on a stool, her little hat in her hand, her fair hair fluttering round her face like a halo of gold.

"You feel safe, don't you?" Lance asked her.

"Why, of course," Fay replied quite gaily, "it's not the first time I've ridden in a tight skirt on a man's saddle, with my legs dangling."

Lance led Emma round, holding her by the bridle: then down the steep incline, with Mr. Micawber padding on in front, and giving short, sharp yaps of delight. Once, Lance looked up at Fay: she looked perfectly serene, untroubled, uninquisitive.

"Comfy?" he asked.

"Quite, thank you," she replied.

A few minutes later they were back on the trail.

"What are you going to do with Emma," Fay asked suddenly, "when we are in the car?"

Funny she hadn't thought of that when first he suggested her letting Emma take her down to the road.

"You won't ask me to drive the car home, will you?" she went on, "while you ride Emma?"

All at once it struck her that Lance, who had not replied to either of her questions, was leading Emma up the trail, instead of down.

"Why do you——?" she began to say, and then uttered a cry: "Amos!"

For it had all happened in less than half a dozen seconds. Emma was still walking on as

if nothing unusual had occurred, but Lance was now in the saddle, behind Fay, with his arms round her, holding her tight, and the next moment he had the rug round her too, so that she felt smothered, and couldn't struggle. She was not exactly frightened—but scared. "Amos!" she cried once more. And then again: "Amos!"

Through a fold in the rug which enveloped her head she could see him: his arms were tight round her, as if she were a baby, she could see his face looking down at her, very much as she herself might have looked on a poor, helpless creature that she wished to shelter and protect. No wildness, no madness, not even human passion in that look—only pity and infinite tenderness, and now and again a gleam of that hungry glance which had made her heart ache when she had caught sight of it just now on the plateau.

But there was no mistaking the resolution with which she was being held—in durance—by sheer animal force. Beyond a slight, futile struggle, she was powerless to move. Her legs were pinioned by the rug, his arms were round her body—she did struggle with all the strength she possessed, but as well try to break an iron chain as the power of those arms that encircled her. Cry or speak she would not. What had been the use? And she was too indignant to utter a word. Not the least addicted to fainting, she yet felt that her senses were gradually going from her. It may have been the heat, it may have been her imprisoned will-power, or something hypnotic in this primæval situation of her-

self—the woman-captive and conquered by the male she had dared to resist—it may have been one and all of these causes, but certain it is that though her spirit still fought with all its might, the tension of her muscles gradually relaxed and she felt a creeping inertia, an unconquerable paralysis of her limbs. She called all the strength of her youth, her will, her indignation to her aid, but one and all refused her service; all she could do now was to close her eyes so as not to see that face above her, those eyes so hard and yet so tender, so full of pity yet so full also of a stern unconquerable determination.

And the less she struggled, the closer did he hold her, till she lay upon his breast—helpless in body yet in spirit unvanquished.

Emma ambled on up the old familiar way, with Mr. Micawber yapping at her heels. The reins rested loosely upon her neck; she didn't seem to feel the weight of her double burden, nor to be fretted by the desperate conflict that raged above her patient back. Lance held his precious burden closer and closer: Fay! his Fay now, by right of conquest, by the right of the arbiter over her destiny; at last he had overcome her struggles, he could revel in the purely male sensation of the conqueror; he had loved her, pitied her, felt for her in turns, now he worshipped her because bodily she was helpless and vanquished. Through the folds of the rug he could see her dear face, with lines that still proclaimed her indignation even in repose; with eyes closed and mouth set tight in sweet, powerless obstinacy. Not for worlds would he have spoken, broken

this spell of silence and of peace which reigned on the great, immeasurable wild. Only in his heart did he murmur words of comfort, did he soothe her troubled, obdurate will. "You poor—poor kid—no use, my dear—it had to be—what you wanted me to do was impossible—utterly, utterly impossible—the great God above wouldn't allow it—He gave me the power and the will to act for you—" But not a breath of this escaped his lips—it was only his hungering eyes that spoke the words which his heart had framed.

Emma ambled up; she was tired now and walked slowly. The sun was high in the heavens, above the gaunt and stately pines. Shafts of golden light pierced the depths of the mysterious forest-land and broke their glittering arrow-heads on the mighty crests of the trees. To right and left of the trail, giant trunks stretched their mighty arms, eternally silent and eternally unmoved; a few of them only, torn from the soil, lay like stricken Titans, wounded unto death, upon the mossy ground.

Low, behind, lay the busy prairie, the road, the railway, the farms, the whole active life of murmuring towns.

And the fringe of the wild beckoned from above.

*Blue Eyes and Grey**Chapter XXII*

THERE was no need to tell Emma whither she was going, or what she was to do when she got there.

When she reached the shack—which was home for her—she just stood still and watched patiently while Lance lifted himself and his precious burden out of the saddle.

Blue Eyes was standing in the doorway of the shack.

“My dear!” she exclaimed, not a little aghast. “What in the world has happened?”

“She’s fainted, I think,” Lance said.

“But——”

“Don’t ask questions, Blue Eyes. Let me carry her in.”

Blue Eyes led the way and Lance carried Fay into the inner room of the shack, laid her down on the bed.

“She’ll be all right, won’t she?” he asked anxiously.

“Yes, she’ll be all right,” Blue Eyes replied rather tartly, “if you leave her to me. But I shall have to know——”

“I’ll tell you all about everything presently. You see to her now, there’s a dear, and I’ll get things ready— Have you had breakfast?”

“Yes! and washed up and put away. You didn’t say——”

“I know I didn’t. I was not sure when we could turn up.”

“We? You turned up, you mean. She, poor thing . . .”

While she talked, still rather tartly for her, Blue Eyes was fussing round Fay. The wonderful dressing-case was there, and she found eau-de-Cologne, salts, brandy.

“She’ll be coming to in a minute,” she said

presently. "Hadn't you better get out of the way?"

"I'll make some tea," he said. "Shall I?"

"Yes. Run away now and close the door."

Lance tip-toed out of the room and softly closed the door behind him. Then he went out and got fresh water from the mountain streamlet close by, filled the kettle and set it to boil on the small oil-stove, got the tea-things ready, set everything in order for the time when Fay should wake.

After that he sat down outside the shack door and waited. Vaguely through the wooden walls he could hear the two girls stirring; the murmur of their voices came only faintly to his ears, because the little window on this side had been carefully closed. He was not the least sorry for what he had done. He had sworn to himself that Fay should never marry that filthy blackguard, and now she never could. He had taken Fate—her fate as well as his own—in his hands and he had no intention of relinquishing the reins. His purpose was as firm as it had been when first the scheme had entered his head—to carry her off since she wouldn't come of her own free will and to keep her hidden away until his full purpose was fulfilled—but it was terrible to think that she would hate him for this: love first, then contempt, then indifference, and now hatred—hatred that would survive its three brothers, love, the first-born, who had been so sweet, contempt and indifference, which, God knows, had been hard to bear—but hatred . . . ! He had not thought that it would hurt so. And for the moment, even

the knowledge that Oskar Horfman would never have her, failed to soothe as it should have done.

The door of the shack creaked behind him. Lance woke from his day-dream and jumped to his feet. Blue Eyes was standing there and she said: "She's awake now. I've made her drink a little hot tea; but she wants to speak to you, so I'll wait out here till you've both done."

"Is she very angry, Blue Eyes?" Lance asked.

"Very."

"But—whatever happens—you'll keep your promise?"

"What d'you mean by 'whatever happens'?"

"Well, I shall be going for one thing," he said, "as soon as Fay has done with me—that is," he added with a quaint little smile, "what is left of me."

"But haven't I kept my promise already? I said I'd come when you wanted me. You asked me yesterday— And I came—though I didn't like the ride on that old nag of Bagley's, and I haven't the least idea how we got here, or where we are——"

"I know, Blue Eyes," he said, "and you've been a brick. But you also promised last night—do you remember?—when I told you that Fay was coming up here to-day, that you would never leave her, not for a minute, wherever she went."

"Well! I thought that very silly at the time, and I told you so. I couldn't see what you were driving at, at the time."

"But you promised?"

"And I didn't know you were going to—"

abduct her like that— I agree with her, it is an outrage.”

“ But you promised,” he insisted.

“ I’m not sure that such a promise would be binding——”

“ And you wouldn’t, anyhow, let her wander alone—nor would you stay up here comfortably while she wandered off. I shan’t be here, and she doesn’t know where she is, any more than you do. And if she wandered off alone she would lose her way in the mountains—whilst if you stuck to her, she wouldn’t venture—so why argue, Blue Eyes? ”

“ Because,” she replied in her quiet, matter-of-fact way, “ you are the biggest tom-fool I ever came across.”

“ Arguing with me won’t make me wise.”

“ No. Because you’re obstinate—and blind—and— Oh! for gracious’ sake, go and have it out with Fay, and leave me alone.”

Lance went into the shack. Fay was standing in the middle of the room. Except for her eyes, which were very much alive, she appeared more lifeless than she had done when she lay half-conscious in his arms. Her face was absolutely colourless, whiter than the anemones that carpet the woods in the spring—her lips seemed bloodless, and her whole body tense and rigid, as if the very essence of motion had gone out of it. But her eyes!— never had they seemed dark to Lance before—he had always loved their grey-green hue, something like the colour of the ocean in Northern latitudes; but now, with that tense look of resentment and burning indignation in them, they appeared in colour like the midnight

sky when Northern Lights play over it and are brighter than the moon.

"How long is this farce going to last?" were the first words that she uttered.

"Farce you call it?" he said with a shrug. "It is earnest enough for me, I can tell you; don't I know that you are going to say you hate me——?"

"I don't hate you," she retorted, "I just think you are a fool—and a coward at that."

"That's right, you dear little kid," Lance said dryly, "fire away at me. But you are not going to marry Oskar Horfman for all that."

"I should like to know how this silly farce is going to stop me?"

"You'll have your wish—later on— Not just yet, though, for I'm not sure. In the meanwhile you'll have to try and make yourself happy. Blue Eyes is here to look after you—and there's everything to make you both comfortable, for a few days. . . . After that——"

"And do you really suppose for one moment that I'm going to stay here another hour? You must be a bigger fool than I took you for."

"You funny little thing," Lance said, "you've got to stay here. You don't know how to get away. You're miles from anywhere in any direction and you haven't the least idea which way to turn."

"That I'll soon find out— But don't let's talk about that. You seem to have a very low estimate of my intelligence."

"Well!" he retorted with a smile, "haven't you of mine?"

She ignored the good-natured taunt, and he had the satisfaction of seeing a faint tinge of colour overspread her cheeks. She still looked bitterly resentful and terribly angry, but now her temper was roused, and she was obviously trying to get him to lose his.

"I suppose," she said coldly, "that your laudable idea was to get me into a sufficiently compromising position that the breaking off of my marriage would be a foregone conclusion?"

"Put it that way if you like. All I know is that from the very first I swore to myself that that damned scoundrel would never get you—now I know that he won't. That's all I care about."

"And about me you care nothing—that's of course obvious. So like a man!— You imagine yourself in love with me—in love? Great Heavens! . . . and you think that I, of all people, am ready to forget everything—everything—and that I am going to throw myself at your feet or in your arms just because you choose to play the part of a cave-man."

"So that's the way you figure it all out, is it? It doesn't strike you that no man living could stand by and see you tied to the meanest skunk that ever crawled on the surface of the earth. . . ."

"That's my business—and my wish."

"Not your wish—and it is my business. If Tom was not man enough to stop this outrage——"

"Tom couldn't—and you know it. So why——?"

"Anyway, as there's no one belonging to you

that has any spunk, it has become my business——”

“Not yours, anyway.”

“Well! Someone had to stop this thing—at any cost—even at risk of getting himself loathed and hated by you, which is about as unpleasant a thing as can happen to anyone. But as there was no one else to do it—why, then, I simply had to take the law in my own hands.”

“And by what right, I should like to know?”

“By right of——”

“Well! Why don’t you go on? By right of what?”

“Because I’ve loved you all my life——”

She laughed in a way that was intended to hurt. And it did.

“You’ve loved me all your life?— You?— That really is too funny——”

“Oh! I know all about that—I am the scum of the earth—the escaped convict—I know——”

“It’s not that——”

“Well, then, anyhow I’m the fool, who just went dotty for a few months—I know that too—that’s why you’ve a perfect right to look down on me as much as ever you like—and to hit me just as hard as ever you please. As Amos Beyvin I have been the darnedest fool that ever walked the earth—and as Lance Madoc I don’t suppose I’m much better——”

“Not much—or I shouldn’t be here.”

“Your being here is the wisest thing I have ever done in all my life—I swore that you should never marry Oskar Horfman—and you shan’t.”

“As if your talking—in that wild way—could

ever make me change—as if I couldn't go from here when I pleased——”

“You may try to get away from here—you may even get lost in the woods—and you may drag poor Blue Eyes with you into all sorts of impossible adventures. But adventures take time, and when Babes are lost in the woods, it takes days before they find their way out again. But anyway, I shall have got what I wanted. You shan't marry Oskar Horfman—you shan't. Get that well into your darling little head. The sacrifice of yourself to that blackguard is not going to take place. You—are—not—going—to—marry—Horfman.”

He punctuated each word with one finger against the palm of his hand. Fay had allowed him to talk on, without an attempt to break in. For one thing, she had not breath enough to interrupt. It was not that he talked loudly or excitedly; on the contrary, he appeared perfectly cool and deliberate, and he never once raised his voice; but it was this determination that took her breath away—that he, Amos Beyvin or Lance Madoc, whatever he was, should dare to talk to her in that way; to her! who had always ordered her own life just as she pleased! . . . to think that any man should dare to throw himself, his will, his obstinacy, athwart her path in life, did indeed for the moment bewilder her and take her breath away. It was only when he had finished talking, when he obviously waited for her to say something, that she found at last the words which she had felt choking her all along:

“And Tom?” she asked, and came just a step

nearer to him, the better to let him see every line of her face, what all this wild scheming and plotting and clashing of will powers was going to mean to them all.

"What about Tom?" she reiterated. "I suppose that in all your pretty schemes for getting hold of me against my will, you never thought of Tom? But let me tell you this——"

"You can't tell me anything I don't know," he said, "and I don't expect you'll believe me when I give you the most solemn assurance that I'll see Tom safely out of his trouble. Nothing is going to happen to Tom, I swear it—I swear it by everything— Of course, you know what my feeling about that has been all along, your life was much too precious to be sacrificed for his—but I know also just how you feel about that miserable business—it wouldn't be you if you felt differently. Well, for your sake, and because he is your brother, Tom is not going to be punished for what he has done. He ought to be, just as I ought to have had my time for knocking that wretched policeman down when I was drunk; but he is not going to be punished. Of course, I know you don't believe me now, and I know that you'll go through hell while you are up here fretting after Tom; but I do swear to you that when presently you leave this glorious bit of God's earth and wander back down there, where there are men and cities and railroads and all sorts of ugly things, you will find the world purer and Tom quite safe."

"I don't believe you," she retorted. "How can I believe you after all the deceit and the lies you told me in order to get me up here? You call

yourself a fool, why not call yourself a coward as well—to strike at me like this is a coward's work—you have no right—no right—I'm ready, more than ready, to do the one thing that I know would have made Tom safe—my own little brother whom I— What do I care what happens to me? what is an unhappy marriage compared with what may happen if—with what will happen now—while I am here—helpless? You talk of——”

She was on the verge of breaking down: her voice was shaking ominously, the words forced themselves through her throat, but they were half choked with sobs. However, she did contrive to pull herself together—just in time— How she would have hated to break down before him—before any man who dared to stand up to her. As it was, she was able to walk up with a firm step to the small mirror which hung on the wooden wall close by—it was one which Emma had brought up here only three days ago—to glance into it and with a steady hand rearrange her hair.

“There's some nice powder in the dressing-case,” Lance said, smiling at her darling, flushed face, which he could just see in the mirror; “the young lady at the drug-store said——”

But even her sense of humour had collapsed for the moment. She did not smile in response, and he went on quietly:

“Then if you've done with me for to-day, I think I'll go— Blue Eyes is just outside.”

Of course she didn't say anything, and he had his hand on the door-handle already, prepared to pass out of her life now without even a farewell, when he turned to her once more and said:

"You'll give me that much credit, won't you?—that I have not said a word to try and justify myself. I know that, by all the rules of our own social world, what I have done is unpardonable. I don't think that it was cowardly, but I daresay I should not be able to convince you of that, even if I tried. But there is just one thing you said just now which I'm rather afraid you meant——"

"I meant every word I said," she retorted coolly.

"Quite so. I am taking that for granted. You said that I cared nothing about you, and that, like a man, I imagined myself in love with you—Now as these are the very last words that in all probability I shall ever speak in your presence, you must forgive me if I speak them plainly. When you said that, you spoke a lie. You mayn't know it to be a lie, but it is one—a cruel, abominable lie. I love you with every bone and sinew in my body, and with every thought and feeling in my soul. I think of you by day; I dream of you by night; during every hour when I am awake I simply ache with longing to hold you—and honestly I think I should go crazy if I suddenly had the chance of kissing your lips. I know that it was through my own folly that I lost you, but I think that if you realized what hell that knowledge has given me, you wouldn't have got at me with that particular lie."

"I'm sorry," she murmured involuntarily. "I . . ."

"Oh no, you're not," he said, "women are never really sorry when they make a man squirm—any more than a man is genuinely sorry when

he has stolen a kiss he is not entitled to. But that's that. Another thing you said was that I imagined you would fall into my arms just because I chose to play the rôle of a caveman— Now that's another lie."

"Amos!"

"Yes, it is. I could no more think of you falling into my arms than I should of the moon falling at my feet. You see how easy it was for me to get you all to myself up here— Nobody knows at this moment where you are—and if I— Besides, should I have got Blue Eyes to come if I'd been the cad you think I am?"

"I didn't mean——"

"Well! You'll be rid of me now. I won't say good-bye. If you'll stay here quietly, you'll get your freedom very soon—but not to marry Mr. Horfman—I'll send Tom to fetch you— Good-bye."

And Lance Madoc went out of the shack and closed the door behind him.

Blue Eyes was sitting outside the door, her elbows on her knees, her chin in her hands, gazing out into the distance and waiting patiently.

"Well!" she inquired, "did you have it out with her?" And as he made no reply, she went on in her placid, unemotional way: "I don't blame her for being angry; and I don't blame you for trying to stop her marrying that Mr. Horfman. But I do think you went the wrong way to work."

"Think so?" he asked, smiling. "What ought I to have done?"

She looked at him steadily for a second or two. It seemed as if in her quiet way she was trying

with all her might to read what went on in his mind.

"You see," Lance said, still smiling—though it was not a merry smile—"you see, she wouldn't listen to me. I had to use force. She wouldn't listen to me—she hates me too much—or despises me—I don't know which."

Blue Eyes gravely shook her head.

"You are a silly fool, my friend, aren't you?" she said.

"So everybody seems to think," he retorted quite cheerfully this time.

Blue Eyes seemed to think that there was nothing more to be said after that. Anyway, she rose and stood by while Lance got into the saddle.

"Pretend you can't walk or something," he said to her when he was ready to start; "she wouldn't leave you here alone if she thought you weren't well—and she must stay here, Blue Eyes, until——"

"Until what?"

"Two days at most," Lance said. "If you'll do that for me—you will, won't you?"

"You are taking a lot for granted, it strikes me."

"I'm taking it for granted that you are the best friend God ever put on the map."

"The softest, you mean."

"Well!—perhaps I do mean the softest—but not in the sense you mean. Anyway, you'll back me up once more, won't you, Blue Eyes?"

"All right," she said, "have it your own way. I'll sprain my ankle, or have palpitations till I see you again."

"You are a brick," he said.

Emma ambled slowly down the incline. Blue Eyes stood on the height watching her and her rider till they plunged into the maze of the trees. Mr. Micawber, fussing over the departure, gave a farewell yap, and then, with flopping ears and erect tail, padded leisurely in the pony's wake. But it was not like Mr. Micawber to do the downward journey in a smooth, uneventful fashion. For one thing, he was not a little hurt that Lance had not at once invited him to snuggle up with him in the saddle. And then—well, he just had to go back once and see how those two strange females were getting on at the shack, once his back was turned. His master was so very unresponsive to-day it made the downward journey quite dull, and, after all, he could easily overtake Emma later on. Mr. Micawber knew every step of the trail, and all he wanted was one more peep at the shack, and one more at the strange females. Moreover, there was a bone, which . . . Well! never mind!

Mr. Micawber padded back unnoticed by his master. One of the strange females was still standing outside the shack, waiting, no doubt, to see the last of Emma's tail disappearing down the mountain-side. At sight of Mr. Micawber she called to him and squatted down on her heels. And she made such a nice lap for him, that he just made a rush for her and snuggled into it. But her arms closed round him, which was a thing no self-respecting dog could tolerate. So Mr. Micawber duly struggled some more and yapped and left dirty mud-marks all over the nice lap. But it

was no use: he was held very tightly and presently felt his ears and his nose very tenderly kissed. He liked that; even condescended to follow the strange female into the shack, where the other female also hugged and kissed him, and, what's more, she gave him a biscuit broken up in milk, a thing which Mr. Micawber adored.

"All right," he said to himself, "my master was simply taking no notice of me; I'll just bide here a wee and see what these two females will do for my especial comfort. I can always get back when I want to."

And Mr. Micawber selected the lap which appeared to him the more engaging and curled himself in it and went to sleep. When he woke he bethought himself of his master and Emma. It was past midday, and many hours had gone by since he last saw them: no doubt it was high time he went to look after them. Bother the females! They were not restful, anyhow: always fidgeting and getting up from their chairs. As for dinner—well! Mr. Micawber didn't see much chance of that!—so he started to pad down the trail.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter XXIII

It was close on five o'clock when Lance Madoc arrived at Sans Souci. He found Mr. Horfman in the smoking-room, sipping a dry Martini in company with Tom, who looked sulky, untidy and harassed.

"I am not disturbing you, Mr. Horfman, am I?" Lance said as soon as the discreet butler had shown him into the room and closed the door behind him. And you'll excuse me being rather untidy."

"Come as you are, Mr. Madoc," Mr. Horfman said, affable as usual. "You are welcome. Sit down, won't you? Have a drink?"

"No, thanks. You know I am not much good at cocktails."

Lance said: "Hello, Tom!" and then sat down.

"You've heard the news?" Mr. Horfman said coolly.

"You mean about Miss Mazeline?" Lance replied. "Why, yes! I did hear something about it; but I didn't know what to make of it."

"Lucky I had not made a to-do about the wedding, or I should be looking a precious fool now," Mr. Horfman said with a nasty, spiteful note in his voice. He rose, poured himself another Martini out of the shaker, and then resumed his seat.

"It is true, then?" Lance said.

"It's true that Miss Mazeline has given me the go-by for to-day. Tom drove over to Boot-ham to fetch her while I waited at the registry office. He found Fay had gone and no one knowing when or where she went. It seems that the maid Julia went into her room as usual at seven o'clock: the room was empty; the bed had been slept in all right, but Fay had dressed and apparently gone out, without saying anything to anybody. At one o'clock, when Tom came to fetch her, she had not come back."

"Aren't you afraid that an accident——?"

"Well, no! I am not, because she did not take either her car or a horse. She seems to have gone on her own feet—got someone to call for her, probably——"

"Is there anything I can do?"

"Why, no, thank you, Mr. Madoc. I don't worry much, you know," Mr. Horfman said with cool indifference. "As I say, it was lucky I never told anyone about the wedding: just those two men last night heard you say something about it—but they don't matter. There was no one from the neighbourhood, anyway, to get a rise out of me, and I believe these registrar fellows never blab. So that's all right, and if Miss Mazeline wanted to make a fool of me, she didn't succeed much."

"And you have no idea where she's gone?—no suspicion?"

"Oh! I expect she's gone up to Lake Louise to her mother—hired a car, p'r'aps, in Glamisdale and made an early start. At any rate, that's what well-behaved young ladies do, I believe—go to their mother's bosom if a marriage doesn't altogether please them— Anyway, Miss Mazeline has gone, and that is all there's about it—Girl's tantrums; not worth worrying about. She'll come back presently," Mr. Horfman went on with a fatuous smile. "That'll be all right."

Mr. Horfman's indifference, real or assumed, as well as his last fatuous remark, had the effect of rousing Tom Mazeline out of his sulky attitude. He had been lolling in the capacious arm-chair, hands in pockets, except when at frequent

intervals he took a drink out of a large tumbler of whisky and soda; but now he suddenly gave himself a shake and sat bolt upright.

"Look here, Oskar," he said, and glowered across at the suave Mr. Horfman. "I can't say I agree with you. It was caddish of you not to let me have your big car. I wanted to go off to Lake Louise and find out if by any chance——"

"You weren't so desperately anxious to do that, my dear chap," Mr. Horfman remarked blandly, "or you wouldn't have driven all the way back here——"

"I wanted to consult you first——"

"Well, and I suggested telephoning to the hotel at Lake Louise—which I did."

"With what result?" Lance asked.

"The lady had not yet arrived at the hotel. But as I told Tom, she scarcely could have done that yet. We'll telephone again later."

"You didn't think of applying to the police then . . .?" Lance asked casually.

"No, my dear fellow, I didn't," Mr. Horfman said. Once more he rose, his glass in one hand, his cigar between two fingers. He was making for the side-table on which stood the cocktail shaker; but on the way he came to a standstill quite close to Tom's chair. Tom was still sitting bolt upright; his shifty, restless eyes were following Mr. Horfman's movements. The latter, close beside him now, looked down at the weak, good-looking face, over which a hot flush, of shame or anger, was slowly spreading.

"No," Mr. Horfman said once more, "I didn't apply to the police; as a matter of fact we

did discuss the advisability of doing so—Tom and I—but on the whole we thought it best—for a day or two at any rate—not to mix the police up in our affairs—what?—you thought that best, didn't you, Tom, old chap?"

He was still looking down at Tom, who wouldn't meet his glance, and who looked for all the world like a dog who is being rated by his master and hopes to evade a whipping. Mr. Horfman gave a slight shrug and a laugh that sounded like a jeer. Then he turned away and went to refill his glass. As soon as his back was turned, a muttered curse broke through Tom's lips; his fists were clenched and he made a movement as if—but Lance quickly put a restraining hand upon his shoulder and the next moment Mr. Horfman had his glass full and looked round at Tom and at Lance with that habitual sneer of his, strongly marked upon his face.

"I think you'll both agree," he said, "that we'd better keep the thing to ourselves, at any rate for the time being. Tom, I know, does; what about you, Mr. Madoc?"

Lance said nothing in reply, and Mr. Horfman apparently took silence to mean consent. He came across the room and sat down. There was nothing anxious, or even ruffled, about his attitude. The very movements of his hands suggested self-reliance and cool insolence, and he smoked or drank, picked up a book and threw it down again, and whenever he glanced at Tom—or at Lance—he smiled complacently to himself.

After a minute or two Lance rose and said the

usual: "Well! I'll have to be going now, Mr. Horfman."

"What's your hurry?" Mr. Horfman said pleasantly. "Why don't you stay and have some dinner—and I'll send you home later in one of the cars?"

"Thanks," Lance said, "I've ridden over: my horse is in your stables. You're sure there's nothing I can do?"

"No, my dear chap, no. Nothing—" Mr. Horfman paused a moment. Then he looked up and caught Madoc's glance, also Tom's. To him they both looked equally anxious, equally hanging upon the pronouncement which was about to issue from his lips. An expression of intense complacency came over his face. He lolled back in his chair, puffed away at his cigar, thoroughly enjoying the sensation of mastery over these two young fools who would be such malleable tools in the future: Tom Mazeline he had had well in hand for some time—a fowl to pluck clean of every feather he possessed—an instrument to use whenever work done personally might be dangerous—as in the case of that tiresome Dutchman. But this escaped convict was a new acquisition, and would certainly prove very useful, for he had—Mr. Horfman had been quick enough to notice it—rather more spunk than that white-livered Tom. Fortunately Mr. Horfman already had him well in hand, but there were few things in life he enjoyed more than to put the screw on, or, figuratively, to crack an animal-trainer's whip. And this was such an excellent opportunity for indulging his fancy in that direction;

whilst in the matter of Fay's flight, the man Madoc might prove very useful—say as a go-between. Therefore, sprawling comfortably in his chair, Mr. Horfman said with his most gracious manner:

"There's really nothing either Tom or you can do for me, my dear chap. It's awfully good of you to offer, but there really isn't anything—except, of course, hold your tongue and keep quiet. We may all of us be in the soup presently, but you two will be in an ocean of mire—Tom especially—if Miss Mazeline carries this joke too far. And by the way——"

His elegant diction was suddenly interrupted by the insistent telephone bell. The instrument stood on a bureau at the other end of the room. Mr. Horfman propelled himself leisurely out of his chair, strode across the room and picked up the receiver:

"Hello!— Hello!— Yes! Yes!— Who is it?— Oskar Horfman speaking— Yes!——"

Tom, uninterested, sulky and silent, took no notice of what went on. Lance, too, appeared indifferent, ready to go; but he was watching Mr. Horfman at the telephone—the sudden frown, the dilated eyes, the hard grip on the receiver; then the quivering lips, the blanched cheeks, the look of puzzlement first, then of fear, then of horror, that slowly distorted the features which a minute ago had been so serene.

The next moment, with a savage curse, Mr. Horfman put the receiver down again and shouted hoarsely to Tom: "Ring the bell, will you?"

It was Lance who rang the bell, whilst Tom,

who as usual was fuddled and incoherent, muttered: "What's the matter?"

"Matter?" Mr. Horfman said with another oath: "The police—they'll be here within the hour—that's all——"

"What the hell do you mean?"

"Just what I say— Your precious sister must have——"

A knock at the door; a savage: "Oh! come in, curse you!" from Mr. Horfman, and when the discreet butler came in, a curt: "Anyone playing, Thomas?"

"Yes, about ten or a dozen."

"Stop 'em at once," Mr. Horfman said in a dry, hard, peremptory tone. "Clear away everything. Send for the cars. Let 'em all get away as quickly as possible. The place has got to be cleared of everything in five minutes. The police are on their way."

"Horfman, how do you know?" The cry came from Tom. The discreet butler had vanished as noiselessly as he had come, and just as if he had received the most casual, most common-place orders. Mr. Horfman called to Lance: "Here, give me a hand with this, will you?" He was trying to move a heavy carved oak chest which stood against the wall. Lance gave him a hand. Together they got the chest out of the way. Then Mr. Horfman got a bunch of keys out of his pocket. The removal of the chest had disclosed a panel in the wall, and the panel apparently concealed an iron safe. The next moment Mr. Horfman was feverishly sorting out papers, glancing quickly at them, throw-

ing some of them back into the safe, stuffing others into his pocket.

"How do you know?" Tom asked him again. "Who told you?"

"I've got one or two good friends in Glamisdale," Mr. Horfman replied: "one of them must have got an inkling of what was in the wind——"

"Who was it? Did they say?"

"I didn't get the name, but it must have been either Tarnstoff or Brownshaw. They are always knocking about the town, and they hear a lot of what's going on. It seems that the police got information this afternoon— Damn the blasted informer, whoever it was——"

He was still busy stowing the papers more comfortably in his many pockets, and his voice was hard and jerky as if he were preoccupied—thinking of other things—or listening to the confused murmur of sounds which came from distant parts of the house—doors being slammed, footsteps pressing on, voices raised suddenly to feverish pitch and then immediately subdued . . . a general sound of hurrying and scuttling, as of giant rats leaving a sinking ship.

And suddenly Horfman turned on Tom, snarling like a wild animal that has been over-teased.

"It'll be worse for you," he cried savagely, "than for me. That's one thing."

The threat sobered Tom in a moment; he rushed up to Horfman, seized him by both shoulders, glared into his face: "Horfman! you wouldn't——"

Mr. Horfman shook those trembling hands off his shoulders. "Wouldn't what?" he asked

coolly. "Send the statements you know of to that damned police? You know I will. Didn't I tell you that if anyone interfered with me you would swing for the murder of your stepfather? Well! someone has interfered with me—I should say it was your sister, only I don't think she would have been quite such a fool— Anyway——"

"Horfman," Tom said more quietly, "if you do that——"

His fists were clenched, and there was an ugly glowering look in his eyes. Mr. Horfman, in his usual way, sneered and shrugged his shoulders. "It wouldn't pay you to murder me as well, you know, old chap," he said. "Not now."

"Horfman, I tell you——"

And then Lance interposed: "Don't you two get quarrelling now. There's no time for that, and it won't pay any of us to waste time. If that 'phone message was correct, what we'd best do, all of us, is to get clear away as quickly as we can."

"What do you mean, get clear away?"

"Lay low for a bit, like Brer Rabbit. It's you they're after——"

"I know that, damn 'em!"

"And if you're not here it will all blow over——"

"Not it!"

"Yes, it will. At any rate, your men will get off with a fine. Do you get me?"

"Not quite——" But something of that intensely savage, animal glance died out of Oskar Horfman's face. He came across the room and

leaned his back against the mantelshelf, and, hands in pockets, he prepared to listen.

"You, the owner of Sans Souci, are absent, d'you see?" Lance said. "You can't be responsible for what your men do in your absence."

"I get you—but——"

"But what? It's quite simple—you can't get everybody away and the place look like a nunnery before the police are here——"

"No, we can't. There's——"

"Lots of things, I know. Well! come away. Let Thomas and the rest stand the racket—Come back presently and look as innocent as a lamb."

"Good idea. I've been on my honeymoon, what? The bride's absence was a blind—But . . ."

"What's the but?"

"Where the devil can I get to?"

"I know of a place—a derelict house—not far—I'll get you and Tom there—and keep you in provisions until——"

"Where is it?"

"Up a mountain trail—not far—but very quiet—I don't think anyone knows of the place but me; at any rate, I've never seen a soul about."

"Up a mountain trail? That means leaving the car on the road, where anyone will spot it——"

"It means nothing of the sort. You've got a couple of horses in your stables, haven't you?"

"Of course."

"I've got my pony here. I told you I'd ridden over. We can start away together, as soon as

you can get your horses saddled, and then across the fields—I know the way and no one will suspect——”

Mr. Horfman, though still undecided, had nevertheless listened eagerly. The thought of meeting the police was abhorrent—the instinct to get away until the worst was over counselled acceptance of Madoc’s plan.

“There’s no time to lose,” Lance put in, just when Horfman was about to speak. Tom had said nothing. He was standing in the middle of the room, in the same position in which the sudden attack on Horfman had left him, only his arms hung limp by his side. He was swaying on his feet like a drunkard; fear paralysed his brain and his limbs. Horfman’s threat—the reminder of what hung over him—had made of Tom Maze-line the slave of abject fear. His restless eyes wandered from one man’s face to the other, only now and then did they turn with a sudden, apprehensive look to the door whenever the sound of angry voices or of scurrying footsteps came echoing across the hall and corridor.

“I shall have to——” Horfman began.

“You can take my advice or not, as you please,” Lance said and strode to the door, “but I’m going, anyhow, and if Tom’s wise, he’ll come with me.”

“Not if I know it——”

“How’ll you stop me, with the police on their way to your door?”

He paused a moment, and for the space of another few seconds the two men gazed at one another, eye to eye. Did a vague suspicion enter

Oskar Horfman's brain just then, that Madoc was not perhaps quite such a fool as he looked, it were impossible to say. Mr. Horfman had always prided himself on his knowledge of human nature—it was part of his stock-in-trade to know men and to make use of them. The only error he ever made in his life, and that was a serious one, was that he believed that Amos Beyvin, *alias* Lance Madoc, was as terrified of the police as he was himself, and that he, Oskar Horfman, held the escaped convict, through that fear, in the hollow of his hand.

"I'm for getting away," Tom Mazeline blurted out at last. With him it was nothing but fear. . . . The instinct to run away. A day or two's respite—always Tom's dictum—and things were sure to mend. Anyway, they could not be worse than they were now; and he knew that Madoc was just the fellow for knowing lonely hiding-places in the mountains. He'd a vague recollection of Lance speaking to him before now about a lonely place—somewhere——"

"Carry on, Madoc," he said. "I'll meet you in the stables."

"Right you are," Lance said; "but I think Mr. Horfman is coming too."

Mr. Horfman had his finger on the bell. As Tom opened the door, the confused noise and hubbub of many voices became more distinct and more loud.

"Here! When is that confounded car coming——?"

"I say, isn't there another roundabout way by which . . . ?"

"Gracious"—this from a feminine voice—"I was going away without a hat."

The "guests" of Sans Souci were all assembled in the hall; only a length of corridor lay between the group of excited players, ruthlessly torn at a moment's notice from their enjoyment and flying from the edifice that threatened to collapse beneath their feet, and the architect of this tottering structure, who had just decided to fly for his life, and leave his minions and his sycophants to bear the brunt of his downfall. Through the hubbub of conversation, the cross-questions and crooked answers, the tinkle of the electric bell was heard distinctly, and caused a sudden panic-stricken silence, broken only by a smothered shriek from one of the women and a hoarse murmur from one of the men.

"Is it the police?— Already——"

"I think not, sir. Not yet," Thomas, the discreet and efficient butler, said reassuringly. "It is only the smoking-room bell."

Tom Mazeline had slipped out of the door and was hastening down the corridor. Flushed, anxious faces peeped at him round the angle of the hall. But he knew his way about the house. He knew the private and tortuous ways which separated what Mr. Horfman always called "The Club" from his own private apartments. The smoking-room was a part of the latter. The corridor which divided it from the main entrance hall had a baize swing door on the right which gave on an inner vestibule, and from thence on the back-garden exit. Tom had said that he was for getting away, and to him Lance's plan ap-

peared like a message from heaven. He hastened down the corridor, with the stables as his objective; close to the baize door he came into collision with Thomas, the ever-discreet butler, looking both immaculate and respectful in his well-cut dress-clothes.

"Did Mr. Horfman ring, Mr. Mazeline?" he asked as Tom brushed hurriedly past him.

But Tom was in no mood to reply and a second or two later Thomas was knocking at the smoking-room door.

"Did you ring, sir——?" Just as if nothing had happened; as if this elegant, well-appointed house was not a sinking ship from which the rats were busy scuttling.

"Yes. I did," Mr. Horfman said. "Shut the door."

For a moment or two master and servant looked at one another keenly, scrutinizing one another's face, trying to read what went on exactly behind the still well-preserved mask. God alone—or was it Satan?—knew what link of vice or crime knit the two of them together; what made the one man so servile and so discreet, and the other so sure of his power.

"I'm going away, Thomas," Mr. Horfman said presently, "for a few days. That is to say, I have been away since early this morning and you haven't seen me since, you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your belief is that I went away this morning to get married and that I have gone to one of the summer resorts in the Rockies for my honeymoon."

"I understand, sir."

"In my absence, you and your fellow-servants thought fit to invite some friends for a little drink and play. It is not the first time you have done such a thing, and you have been at great pains to conceal these malpractices from me."

"Quite so, sir."

"If you've thoroughly understood me, Thomas," Mr. Horfman now concluded, "there'll be two thousand dollars for you on my return, and five hundred for each of the others. Now, is that clear?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"The fine—you are sure to get one—I'll pay, of course. Now tell Katner to get out two sets of riding things: one for me and one for Mr. Mazeline. We are running upstairs to change immediately— Wait a moment. Also send over to Roundley to have Stella and Red Robin saddled and to see that Mr. Madoc's pony is all right, but not to bring the horses round—we'll mount in the stable-yard."

"Yes, sir."

"Stay! Katner had better put up a few toilet things in the smallest grip he can find, and you can let him and Roundley know that in their case, if all's well, they'll each get a thousand dollars from me."

"Thank you, sir."

"Now you can go."

As discreetly, as respectfully as he had come, Thomas withdrew, leaving the door slightly ajar; his soft, shuffling footsteps soon died away down the corridor.

"That's what I call being well served, Mr. Madoc," Oskar Horfman said complacently.

"They'll get more than a fine, I think," Lance remarked.

"They won't mind sitting in prison for a bit. It won't be the first time." Mr. Horfman concluded with a laugh, "and Thomas'll think it cheap at the price."

He took a Havana from the silver box on the table and proceeded to light it.

"Have a cigar?" he said coolly.

"No, thanks."

"Then, if you're ready— I'll just run up to change— You'll find that ass Tom down in the stables; send him up to my dressing-room, will you? He knows the way."

"I will."

"It's a good plan of yours, Madoc. I wonder what made you think of it."

"You've said it yourself, Mr. Horfman; we none of us like to see the police mixed up in our affairs."

"That's right. You're a sharp fellow, you know. You might be very useful to me when all this has blown over."

"Very kind of you to say so, Mr. Horfman."

"Not at all. Well! see you in ten minutes——"

He went off whistling the latest dance tune. Lance followed him down the corridor and through the swing doors. Here Mr. Horfman, having nodded to him, went up the stairs, and Lance went out by the back door on his way to the stables. Thomas and his fellow-servants were left free to deal with the agitated clients of Sans

Souci. Three or four cars were already waiting at the front door; into these they scurried, like rats seeking their burrows. Thomas, irreproachable in his manners, stood at the front door until the last of the cars drove away. So great had been the scare, so rapid the exodus, that the usual tips were forgotten. But for once Thomas didn't mind that. There would be two thousand dollars waiting for him when all this had blown over. He knew that Mr. Horfman could not carry on business without him, that they two were, in fact, dependent on one another. Well! a fine—or even a short term of imprisonment—wouldn't hurt Thomas, and two thousand dollars would go to swell the nice little deposit account which he kept in a Seattle bank against a rainy day.

Yes! Mr. Horfman was being well served, but Thomas was getting well paid for his services. Knowing that, he was ready for anything and awaited the arrival of the police with a mind entirely devoid of fear.

*Blue Eyes and Grey**Chapter XXIV*

ACROSS the fields behind Mr. Horfman's property, then by a roundabout way and cutting through Glade Wood, a short trot along the road and finally the mountain path— The riders hadn't touched Glamisdale or the road which led from the town to Sans Souci. For aught they knew the

police by now had arrived at the mansion and Thomas — outwardly scared and repentant — would be confessing his own guilt, and in a minor degree that of his fellow-servants.

"That was a good idea of yours, Madoc," Mr. Horfman said, when for a moment he pushed Stella up alongside Emma. The rest of the time he had ridden alongside Tom, with Madoc leading all the time: "to show the way," as he had put it when he first took the lead. Tom had not opened his mouth the whole time, and Mr. Horfman, bored with his silence, wanted to talk.

"It was the only way, wasn't it, Mr. Horfman?" Lance remarked in reply.

"We couldn't have carried it through, though, if it had not been for Thomas."

"No, perhaps not. But then I knew that Thomas wouldn't let you down."

"He is a wonder, isn't he?"

"Yes, he is, in knowing which way his bread is buttered."

"I like to have men like that about me, Mr. Madoc," Mr. Horfman said; "men who have had misfortunes—like yourself, for example—and Tom. I like to know all about them—you understand——?"

"I do."

"And then, mind you, I make their fortunes. Look at Thomas. He is rapidly becoming a capitalist——"

Mr. Horfman paused a moment, then he added: "I'll make your fortune too, Mr. Madoc, if you'll stick to me."

"Am I not doing that now, Mr. Horfman?"

"And you won't be sorry you've done it, my dear chap, let me assure you——"

"If you don't mind," Lance broke in quietly, "I'll get ahead again for a bit; the path is rather narrow——"

"Have we a long way to go yet?"

"Only a few hundred yards——"

He pressed Emma once more into the lead. She knew the way and her stride was long and easy. Red Robin and Stella were not quite so familiar with mountain trails as she was and began to lag behind. Lance turned in the saddle and shouted down to the others: "We'll let the horses have a bit of a rest for ten minutes——"

"But not on this confounded mule track——"

"No. Just off here to the left—a nice place for a rest—as there's rather a steep bit after that——"

"But, I say, what about food and drink?— I shall be jolly hungry presently—and thirsty, I can tell you."

"Don't worry, Mr. Horfman. You'll find everything you want——"

"You're a wonderful fellow, Madoc. Ain't he, Tom?"

Lance had turned Emma's head to the steep bank that led up to Amos' Rest.

"I say," Mr. Horfman called out, "Stella'll never get up there."

"Wait a moment, then, I'll get her up for you."

Lance swung himself out of the saddle, tethered Emma to a tree on the edge of the trail, and taking hold of Stella's bridle, he led her and her rider

up the bank. Stella followed him as easily as she would have walked along a tan course.

"I've heard it said that you were marvellous with horses," Mr. Horfman condescended to say. "You remember that first time we met at Mr. Crum's?—that was a nice mare too—you were off on her like the wind— Who'd have thought that we should become such friends? What?"

Stella had reached the plateau seemingly without turning a hair.

"You'd like to dismount, wouldn't you, Mr. Horfman," Lance suggested, "and give Stella a breather while I go back and give Tom a hand?"

"Right you are."

Mr. Horfman dismounted and Lance led Stella round to where a tall pine tree, gigantic and stately, grew seemingly out of a handful of earth against the bare rock. He tethered the mare to the tree, gave her a reassuring little pat, rubbed her velvety nose, and generally made her feel at peace with the world, and content that she had a friend close by.

"I understand now, Madoc——" Mr. Horfman said.

"What, Mr. Horfman?"

"How it was you saw, or thought you saw—or didn't see—what happened in Glade Wood when the old Dutchman's car was on fire— You were up here, I suppose."

"Yes!" Lance said curtly. "I was."

Mr. Horfman found himself a seat on a projecting bit of rock, lit a cigarette and surveyed the landscape.

"You won't be long?" he called out to Lance.

"Not five minutes."

"I don't want to stay here for ever, you know. I'd rather get under a shelter—where I can have a drink."

"You'll be under shelter soon, Mr. Horfman. Don't get impatient while I look after Tom."

Lance disappeared down the steep slope, between the brushwood, and Mr. Horfman was left to contemplate nature. Down below, on the trail, Tom on Red Robin had been content to wait and stare up at the path, the trees, the moss, the sky, all things which interested him not at all. His mind was not very clear; but even through the fog which hung about his brain he saw the terrible abyss which yawned before him. What Fay's share was in the cataclysm which now threatened him, he didn't know; in his less fuddled moments he felt convinced that she would not willingly have brought this cataclysm about. She had been willing to marry Horfman in order to save him, Tom, from the terrible consequences of his crime: it was not reasonable to suppose that she would at the eleventh hour leave him so entirely to his fate. It was not like Fay to do such a mean trick—to leave him in the lurch—at the mercy of that brute Horfman, who, of course, was enraged and spiteful—Then who in Heaven's name had played that dirty trick? and where the hell was Fay?

"Hello!" That was Madoc's voice. Tom gave back a responsive: "Hello!"

Lance took the bottom of the slope at a leap. He went up to Emma and undid the reins which tethered her to the tree; then, leading her, he came close up to Tom, put his hand on Red Robin's

bridle, and looking Tom squarely in the face he said: "Listen to me, Tom, and if you value your life, you'll do just what I tell you."

"What the devil are you driving at? Where's Horfman?"

"Never mind about him for the moment. You are going to mount my pony, Emma, and just let her take you along without trying to guide her in any way. She knows just where to go. It is her home and she'll make straight for it with you——"

"But I'm not——"

"Don't interrupt, Tom. You've just got to do as I tell you. Where Emma's home is, you'll find Fay. She isn't alone, because Nurse Browne is with her. They are quite comfortable where they are, and as it will be getting dark by the time you arrive, you'd best spend the night with them. . . ."

"But, heavens alive, man, aren't you going to tell me what it all means? I can't——"

"It only means, my dear fellow, that I couldn't stand by and see Fay married to that swine. You see yourself now, don't you, what an unmitigated blackguard he is——"

"Lord, yes! for two pins he'd——"

"Send you to the gallows—just out of spite—and then—to think of Fay married to him was just impossible, and that's all there was to it——"

"But even so——"

"I had to have a little conversation with Mr. Horfman, but I wanted Fay out of the way—and you, too, for a matter of that. Now you just let Emma take you and I'll swear by God that you'll be perfectly safe— Didn't I promise Fay

that you'd be safe?—and what's more, Fay shan't marry Horfman. Can't you trust me, Tom?—not even if I tell you that I would give my life, such as it is—worthless enough, God knows—to see Fay happy—and she wouldn't be happy unless she saw you safe— And now we've talked far too long—Mr. Horfman will be getting impatient and spoiling everything—off with you and on to Emma's back— Trust her too—she's a gem on this trail."

It was a matter of the stronger will at grips with the weaker. Tom, still scared and fuddled, and in addition now, very much bewildered, lowered himself mechanically out of the saddle, and equally mechanically mounted Emma, who had stood by, like a veritable effigy of patience, while this long colloquy was going on. She allowed Tom to mount her without making a movement, and when her master gave the word, she started in her smooth, even gait up the trail which led to her home.

Lance watched horse and rider till they were out of sight, and then climbed up through the brushwood, back to Amos' Rest.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter XXV

MR. HORFMAN was not impatient. He had had a good many nerve-shocks this afternoon and was content to rest for a moment, thought- and worry-free, and let further events shape them-

selves. He had no doubt that they would shape themselves for his own special comfort and good fortune: the latter had never deserted him—not for long—and though this business, first with Fay Mazeline and then with the police, was unpleasant, he had had worse scares before now and come through unscathed.

If the worst came to the worst—but why think of that? Had he not plenty of men around him, whose fortunes were dependent on his own, or, what was still more important, whose fate hung in the balance which he held poised in his hand. That fool Tom now—and Lance Madoc—a sharp fellow that; quite alive to his own precarious position and anxious evidently to attach himself to a man who would put him in the way of making a pile, whilst keeping, as far as possible, within the law.

“Hello!” Mr. Horfman said, as soon as he caught sight of Lance, “what’s happened to Tom?”

“He’s all right. Don’t you worry about him.”

Lance came up close to where Mr. Horfman was sitting, contentedly smoking a cigarette.

“I thought I’d just tell you, Mr. Horfman,” he said, “that it was I who gave the information to the police about you, this afternoon.”

He had taken off his coat: it was hanging over his arm, and he was standing hands on hips, a fine figure of a man in shirt and riding-breeches, a model of youth and energy, with eyes shining with a resolve that could only have found birth in a youthful brain. At his words Mr. Horfman’s whole body had given a sudden jerk, and then

stiffened equally suddenly. He put his cigarette to his lips, and Lance's keen eyes could not detect their quiver; his eyes narrowed as they glanced up at Lance, narrowed until they looked like mere slits, and their expression was veiled behind the lids.

"Damn you!" he said slowly; "you've been telling me lies, then?"

"Any amount. I couldn't have got you out of your own thieves' den otherwise, could I?"

"And you got me here—? What for?"

"To settle scores together. They're heavy, but that's all."

Before saying anything more, Mr. Horfman threw away his cigarette; then, with studied deliberation, he struggled to his feet and in his turn, placing his hands on his hips, he said:

"Now what's your game, Mr. Amos Beyvin?"

"To wring a statement from you that neither you nor your precious friends know anything—anything, mind you—of what happened in Glade Wood or how Mr. van Menterghem came by his death."

"And how do you think you are going to do that, my friend?" Mr. Horfman retorted with a supercilious lift of the eyebrows.

"With fountain pen and paper which I've brought with me—and with moral and physical persuasion if you're obstinate."

"Very pretty—very nicely planned—but do you suppose that such a statement wrung by threats—even if I did consent to put my name to it, which I certainly won't—would hold good before the law——?"

"We'll word it so that it does," Lance said.

Mr. Horfman only shrugged his shoulders and turned away. "Rot!" he said emphatically.

But Lance had him by the shoulder and swung him round—gripped him tightly and forced him to look him eye to eye.

"Rot, is it?" he said. "Just look at me straight, will you, Mr. Horfman?—and see whether I look like a man who is rotting——"

The supercilious smile still curled round Mr. Horfman's heavy lips.

"Murder?" he said coolly. "Is that what you mean?"

"We don't call it murder when we shoot a mad dog, or stamp on a venomous reptile," Lance retorted equally coolly. "But though you are more vile than any cur, and more dangerous than an adder, I'll fight you until both of us are dead."

"You seem to forget that my servants know that we went out together, and that if you should happen to survive this heroic fight, you would swing for it, my friend."

"As if I cared!" Lance said very slowly, measuring every word, "as if I wouldn't ten thousand times sooner be dead—on the gallows or otherwise—than see you ruin the life of a woman who— You just listen to me, Mr. Oskar Horfman. Through you I have seen the boy Tom reduced to a sot and a criminal. I've seen that fine old Dutchman foully murdered at your instigation, and, by God! I'm not going to see you marry Fay Mazeline and bring her down to Heaven knows what degradation— Swing for it? — Great Lord! — I don't propose to

come out of this alive, but if I do, I'll gladly swing for it. . . . So now you see that I mean every word I say. . . . Will you write the statement I want?—or take off your coat and fight me like a man——?”

“I don't think I'll do either, my fine fellow,” Mr. Horfman said still quite calmly; “you can't force me to do either, so what's the good of talking?”

But Lance, without wasting more words, seized Oskar Horfman by the coat collar; with knee and hand he pushed him, till together they reached a point on the edge of the plateau, where the ground fell away, sheer and rocky, into a narrow canyon, a hundred feet below, where rippled the mountain stream.

“You are right,” Lance said, speaking just as calmly as the other; “I cannot force you either to write or fight. But if you'll do neither, then as there's a heaven above us, I'll throw you down there to rot, and myself after you.”

Never in all his life had Oskar Horfman faced death at such close quarters. Vain at last were his attempts to appear supercilious and cool: rage and terror had him in their grip—but terror was the stronger. Instinctively he put his hands to his face, so as to shut out from his sight the awesome vision of his own body lying mangled on the rocks, with the carrion hovering nigh. He felt himself in the grip, not of a man, not of the escaped convict Amos Beyvin, the fool whom he had hoped to use at will as a tool for his own nefarious ends, but in that of an avenger, of Nemesis incarnate, of the angel with

the flaming sword, and before his eyes there was a glowing dial which marked the hour of retribution.

His hands dropped from his face; for a second or two his eyes roamed wildly round, vainly seeking for the way of escape; but before him yawned the abyss and behind stood the avenger. And with the fear of death upon him, he called to his aid all that was left to him of will-power and of cunning.

"I'll write anything you like," he said.

Lance stepped back, dragging Oskar Horfman with him. The latter looked like a rag of humanity — tottering — backboneless — perspiration streaming down his face, whilst his dark hair clung, matted, to his forehead. He staggered to his feet, until he felt himself on safer ground, then he said:

"You have paper with you?"

"Yes," Lance replied. "Inside my coat."

"Get it, will you? I have my own fountain pen."

For a moment Oskar Horfman's right hand was behind his back.

"It's in my hip pocket," he said. The next second, with a cry of: "Take that, you——" he had a revolver out and bracketed on Lance. "You asked for it, you know," he said.

The shot went off, but just a fraction of a second too late, for Lance, with the quickness of eye and movement learnt in this New World from the beasts of primæval forests, had seen the fell purpose and with one bound was upon Horfman—and the two men, locked in one an-

other's arms, rolled over and over on the rocky ground.

And then began one of those age-old struggles, not only for mere life, but for the ascendancy of one man over the other, which the gods of yore loved to watch when first men fought for the possession of woman. These two men hated one another, not because of racial or moral antagonism, but because they both loved the same woman; they fought, not so much for hatred of one another, as for possession of Fay Mazeline.

Lance, who had perceived Oskar Horfman's treacherous movement almost before it was completed, had his left arm up at the instant that the shot went off; it penetrated the elbow, and worked its way to the shoulder. Thus were youth and vigour handicapped; but neither pain nor loss of blood, nor cracking of sinew counted in this struggle. The men were locked in one another's arms—and on the ground there was only a struggling mass of humanity—panting, bleeding—a medley of legs kicking the air—of hands seeking for something to knead and to crush—one wrist held aloft still gripping the revolver, and a hand clutched tightly round that wrist, forcing it by sheer pain to open and let go—a shot went off—then another—the bodies fell apart—two men now, standing with heads bent and fists clenched ready to fly at one another's throat once more. The revolver lay on the ground—Lance gave it a kick and it struck a projecting boulder—the third shot went off into the air. The two men, glaring at one another, with eyes rendered blind by fury,

came at grips again—once more they rolled upon the rocky ground, once more was the fair stony earth soiled with human blood—the two bodies, only half-clothed now, in torn breeches and shirts hanging in rags, rolled steadily—relentlessly—toward the abyss.

And suddenly through the roaring and the panting, through the silence of the mountain fastness and the tumultuous passion of the men, there came a light, clear sound—the joyful yapping of a dog—a scrubbing among the brushwood—and the yapping broke into a bark of delight——

Lance, who at this moment had his enemy down under him—who had his fingers round the other's throat—who with a last gasp of dying strength felt the end in sight and the abyss near—looked up for an instant—by instinct—and saw Mr. Micawber struggling up the ledge of the plateau—he looked up—dazed—bewildered—only for an instant, of course—a fraction of a second—and for that infinitesimal fraction of time his grip relaxed—his attention was drawn away from his conquered enemy to his little dog——

Was the devil in truth taking a hand in this struggle? was he taking care of his own? What Oskar Horfman lacked in youth and vigour he more than made up in guile—that one fraction of a second—it was more than enough to throw the worst of Lance's weight off his chest—to ease the grip on his throat—the dog came running across, with ears flapping and little barks of joy—Lance, puzzled at his appearance, at see-

ing him here at all, had turned, by sheer instinct, by sheer love of the little beast, to look at him—a slight turn of the head—a second's wandering thought, and he lost his grip—eased his weight, just for that brief second—and there was the revolver not a couple of yards away—four shots gone—but there were two more cartridges in the magazine, and while Lance, brought back all in the same second from his inattention, his wits returning to him as fast as they had gone, Oskar Horfman, fainting and exhausted, had stretched a feeble, trembling hand and found the revolver. Almost unconscious but spurred by fear of death, he raised the weapon—took aim—pulled the trigger——

Then a woman's cry: "Tom, don't let him . . .!"

And an answering oath: "No! By God!"

The shot went off— Two struggling bodies, locked in each other's arms rolled down the rocky slope to the stream's stony bed, a hundred feet below, whilst another lay prone, unconscious and bleeding on Amos' Rest.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter XXVI

OVERHEAD wind, cloud and light had made a sky more wonderful than man could ever dream. The everlasting sun, like a glowing sword within a sheath of clouds, sank slowly in the west. Above the crimson orb two immense pillars of broken cloud rose like wings of some giant bird,

poised ready for flight, its plumage purple and streaked with flame.

And where the crimson and gold faded into palest amber, the sky above was blue as a Southern sea on a warm, spring day and flecked here and there with fleecy clouds, delicate and round like the petals of a rose. Far away to the west the Titans sat in their rocky fastnesses, their ice-crowned heads flushed with crimson light. But down in the prairie twilight was slowly creeping, and chased the golden light away; its soft rose-tinted veil lay over the great cosmorama of human toil and human pain.

On Amos' Rest a lengthened shadow stretched right across to the edge of the abyss, where broken earth and detached stone marked the culminating spot of a great tragedy.

"Come away, Miss Mazeline; you can do no good risking your neck that way. We must see what we can do to get help."

It was a quiet, placid voice that first broke the silence which had brooded on the wind-blown spot. The silence had come in the wake of that last report and the hoarse cries of the two men locked in a deadly embrace. Neither of the women had uttered a sound; they had reached the top of the plateau just in time to see Oskar Hoffman point the revolver at Lance. Fay had uttered the cry: "Tom, don't let him!" It had roused in Tom Mazeline not only the long-dormant instinct of manhood and courage, but also all the latent hatred and fury against the man who had ruined his life and blackened his soul with crime.

With one bound he was on Horfman, had seized the wrist which held the revolver and thrust his knee into the other's chest. The shot went off, and Fay and Blue Eyes saw the two men, at grips with one another, disappear over the edge of the abyss, while Lance, hit in the breast, rolled over inert on the ground.

Fay, dumb with horror, rushed to the edge of the precipice, but the gathering darkness down below hid the end of the tragedy from her view.

Nurse Browne's instinct was to tend the living rather than to mourn the dead. She was quick and practical and efficient: her cambric petticoat, torn into strips, did first aid in the way of staunching the worst of the flow of blood.

"We've got to get him down into civilization, that's the first thing we've got to do," she said in her decisive manner. "Now, if you'll give me a hand——"

Fay made an almost superhuman effort to conquer her horror, to tear herself away from the spot where Tom—her little brother—had found death in a noble and instinctive effort to stay a murderer's hand.

He had started on his way, trusting to the pony to guide him, just as Lance Madoc had adjured him to do. He had not gone a hundred yards before he was met by Mr. Micawber, who was leading the way with all the air of a Boy Scout doing his helpful act for the day. Mr. Micawber had slept on the new cushion in the lonely shack until he thought it time to find his master and Emma somewhere down below. Indifferent as to whether he would be followed or not, he started

to pad along on the way which he knew so well.

And Fay, seeing the dog start off so resolutely, declared her intention to follow him.

"You may come or not, Nurse Browne," she said, "but that dog knows the way and I am going to follow him."

It was not Nurse Browne's way to argue when she knew that argument would be futile. As well try to stop the flood of the Mississippi as to stand between a woman and what she has set her mind to do. But she had promised Lance that where Fay went, thither would she follow her. And so the two girls set out on their twelve-mile tramp through the woods and down the trail, guided by Mr. Micawber.

They had been four hours on the way when they first caught sight of Tom. Both were half-dead with fatigue: if Blue Eyes, in her matter-of-fact, practical way, had not at the last moment stuffed a few biscuits in her pocket, they would have been more than half-dead with inanition as well.

The sight of Tom on the back of Emma was a shock of surprise. It took the women some time to drag a coherent story out of him: he was still fuddled and dazed, and the shock of seeing Fay so suddenly, further upset his nerve. He spoke about Horfman and the aborted wedding—of Lance and the police raid on Sans Souci—and then of the flight on horseback. And in the midst of his confused tale there came the sound of the first revolver shot.

There are certain senses more keen than the

five with which the human body is alone credited; and one of these is keener in women than in men: it is the sense of intuition when danger threatens one they care for. Both Fay and Blue Eyes, at sound of that revolver shot, sped down the trail in the wake of Mr. Micawber. Tom also turned Emma's head back the way she came. But it was Mr. Micawber who was the vanguard. That intuition of danger ahead is keen in a dog also: where a beloved master is concerned, a dog knows when danger threatens him; he calculates—he reasons—who shall say that a dog has not a certain something within him that is almost equivalent to a soul? Anyway, Mr. Micawber, who had stopped for a conversation with Emma, immediately started down the trail once more . . . padding along on his short stumps, his one ear flapping with the energy of his movements, he made his way towards Amos' Rest.

Just when the party came to the point where climbing through the brushwood became necessary, another shot rang out, and then another. Mr. Micawber knew his way, so did Emma; the two women followed the two faithful beasts.

And now all was over. Tom had in all probability expiated every weakness and every crime in that last heroic act of saving his friend from their common enemy. Instinct had urged him on—a noble instinct which Oskar Horfman had not altogether crushed in him. Fay tore herself away from the contemplation of that veil of darkness which hid the bodies of the two men from view.

It was a difficult task which the two women—

they were mere girls—had still to accomplish. Emma fortunately was there—patient, tired Emma, who stood still as a statue while the two women, with infinite trouble and anxiety, managed to hoist the inanimate body of Lance Madoc upon her back. It is wonderful what women can do in moments of stress such as this! Nature seems to give them an amount of physical strength which she habitually denies them.

Twilight fortunately lingered on: a luminous twilight with the promise of a bright moon when the night finally held sway.

“We can’t do better than follow the dog,” Blue Eyes had said in her decisive way; “we can’t be far from the road now and once there we can get help.”

To the two of them it seemed like the descent from a new Calvary. Weary, footsore, with aching hearts and quivering nerves, Fay Maze-line and Nurse Browne reached the road at last, just when in the east a pale amber light behind a bank of purple clouds heralded the coming of the moon.

Blue Eyes and Grey

Chapter XXVII

IN a narrow, snow-white bed, in a narrow snow-white room in Glamisdale Hospital, Lance Madoc was slowly regaining his grip on life.

When first he returned to consciousness, it seemed to him indeed as if he were waking from an age-long dream. The room with the

white curtains, the low white ceiling, the open casement through which he caught sight of a maple tree in all the glory of its summer leafage, and then a firm, white hand, holding a medicine glass. Obediently he took it, as he had always done: his eyes ached so much that he couldn't look up—not beyond the snow-white cuff—but his ear just caught the sound of a clear, practical voice saying very softly: "There now, try to go to sleep."

As she had done long, long ago, she ministered to him in her quiet, methodical way, dressed his wounds, set bandages straight and when that was done gave him a reassuring little pat and said: "Sorry I hurt you!"

Was it, then, only yesterday or last week that he had worn convict's garb and travelled between two warders in a train that was wrecked? Had he ever come bodily to a wonderful New World, where all sorrows could be laid to rest in the kindly bosom of Nature, where all the past could be forgotten, and all that was fine and good and true and manly could be born again?

Surely all the things that troubled his brain now like a nightmare had never really happened! It all seemed so unreal— Blue Eyes alone seemed real, with her big white apron, her white cuffs and collar, and her white shoes with the sensible heels.

When he felt a little stronger he asked her whether he was still in England, with the prospect of every kind of shame still before him—and with Fay—Fay!—gone out of his life for ever.

"Don't ask silly questions," Blue Eyes replied.

"you're in Canada now—but you're in hospital—and have just got to keep quiet——"

Once she got rather impatient with him because he would talk instead of trying to sleep. He said:

"If you promised me that I should never wake again, I'd go to sleep like a lamb."

Whereupon she was as near being angry as it was possible for her to be.

"You're not half-ungrateful, are you?" she said, "after all the trouble you're giving?"

"But, Blue Eyes," he argued, "will you tell me what's the good of my living now——? I shall have to go through all those horrors again—trial, verdict—I know them—I've been through them—I don't care in a way, of course, because that swine is out of the way and Fay——"

Then she broke into his wild talk, and told him all that had happened.

"It's time you knew," she said quietly, "though the doctor didn't want you to get excited."

He didn't get excited while she told him quite simply and clearly just what had happened, after he left her and Fay virtual prisoners in the lonely shack on the fringe of the wild.

"It was little Mr. Micawber who was the hand of Fate," she said.

"It was best for Tom!" Blue Eyes went on in her quiet way. "He died like a man, trying to save you. The verdict at the inquest made that very clear—and of course Miss Mazeline and I were witnesses to the facts."

She told him everything and he listened without getting the least excited. In the end all he said was:

"Thank God that blackguard cannot get her now."

Then he asked for Mr. Micawber.

"Won't they let me have him," he asked, "now I'm better?"

"We don't like dogs in hospitals," Blue Eyes said, "but I will see Matron about it."

"Where is he now?"

"Miss Mazeline is looking after him," she said.

She was on the point of leaving the room when a word from him made her turn back.

"Blue Eyes——"

"Yes? What is it?"

"Does she—does Fay, I mean—hate me worse than ever now?"

Then, as Blue Eyes did not reply, he added: "Because of Tom, I mean— In a way——"

"Oh! do be quiet and go to sleep," she said and went out of the room.

But Lance did not go to sleep. The day was waning and there was a golden light outside. Long, long shadows lay across the grass, and a blackbird whistled in the old maple tree. Lance didn't sleep: he only dreamed of a wonderful wintry night with a sky bluer than the darkest sapphire and a radiant honey-coloured moon—and he dreamed of those wonderful Northern Lights which were like an immense veil of translucent rose and mauve and chrysoprase, like transparent draperies waved by Titans' hands. He dreamed that he stood on the bridge of Shed 18 and that Fay stood beside him, her little hat pulled down over her corn-coloured hair, and the fur collar of her coat hiding her chin and mouth.

He also dreamed that with venturesome and trembling hands he drew the fur collar aside, that he saw her lips slightly parted, and her eyes the colour of the Northern Lights.

And in his dream he put out his arms in a gesture of passionate longing.

And suddenly he felt a soft, warm body wriggling against his breast, and a sharp, warm tongue was licking his face.

"Hello, Mr. Micawber!" he cried, wideawake all of a sudden, and his arms closed round the little dog: "where have you come from?"

"I thought I would bring him," a soft, tender voice whispered close to his ear. "Nurse Browne said I might."

And beside him on the pillow a fair-haired head was laid, and a soft, velvety cheek that had the fragrance of a rose rested close to his lips. Then an arm stole round his neck, and the voice whispered his name:

"Amos!"

And thus the dream became a reality.

Ten minutes later Nurse Browne came in. That is to say, she just peeped into the room and tiptoed out again. She closed the door behind her and stood for a while, almost motionless, in the dim-lighted corridor. Then she put one finger up to her eyes.

"It's all right, Lena Browne," she said to herself, "and don't you be a fool!"

THE END

THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

A full-length "Bull-Dog Drummond" Novel by
"SAPPER"

Author of Bull-Dog Drummond, The Black Gang, etc.

Carl Petersen was dead and the account between him and Bull-Dog Drummond appeared settled, but an important factor was missing from the balance sheet—Irma, Petersen's lovely relict! Irma's desire for vengeance bordered on madness, but her wits were sharp, and no crude methods would satisfy her. Bull-Dog Drummond and the lovely Irma met, and Bull-Dog Drummond did, indeed, realise that "the female of the species is more deadly than the male."

THE RUNAGATES CLUB

By JOHN BUCHAN

Author of Witch Wood, The Dancing Floor, etc.

Mr. Buchan's new volume is a record of the stories told at the Runagates Club, a group of fifteen men who had queer tasks during the War. Among the members are old friends like Richard Hannay, Lord Lamancha, and Sandy Arbuthnot. One or two of the chapters deal with War experiences, but the collection covers a wide area, both geographical and spiritual. All are stories of adventure.

ELIZA FOR COMMON

By O. DOUGLAS

Author of Penny Plain, Pink Sugar, etc.

O. Douglas's new novel, "Eliza for Common," is, like her other books, a story of modern Scottish life. It is a study in temperament—of a girl who begins with revolt against her environment and ends by the appreciation and the acceptance of it which come from increased wisdom and humanity. The story is laid in Scotland, both city and country, in Oxford, and in London, and a host of delightful characters fill the different stages.

AGAIN SANDERS

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of Again the Three, The Crimson Circle, etc.

Commissioner Sanders, "dear old Captain" Hamilton, and the one and only "Bones"—here they are again; just as perfectly good-humoured as ever when all's well, and just as terrifyingly efficient as ever when His Britannic Majesty's prestige in their particular corner of his African domain demands it. Sanders is the stuff of which heroes and empires are made. So, for that matter, is friend "Bones," though he doesn't know it. And it is impossible not to be thrilled by Edgar Wallace.

DAVID AND DIANA

By CECIL ROBERTS

Author of Sagusto, Little Mrs. Manington, etc.

Mr. Cecil Roberts, in his new novel, has come home, and has written a great London novel, in which he tells the very human story of a young girl from the provinces and her London lover. Their romance is symbolised by two statues, that of "Diana" in Hyde Park, and of "David" in Grosvenor Place. In such a setting delightful Diana and young David work out, through disastrous events, their story amid the bricks of London. It would not be Mr. Cecil Roberts if he did not carry his readers abroad once, and so the author of "Scissors" and "Sails of Sunset" shows us Diana on the Riviera for a brief time, a setting that calls forth the colour and descriptive power which has made his work famous. "David and Diana" is a delectable story of London lovers.

THE FORTUNATE WAYFARER

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Author of Miss Brown of X.Y.O., The Light Beyond, etc.

Crossing the cobbled street of a cathedral town, Martin Barnes, commercial traveller, is invited to enter an impressive dwelling with a secluded air, whose owner, Lord Ardrington, believing himself at the point of death, presents this fortunate wayfarer with notes to the value of £80,000. Ardrington, however, recovers, and Barnes, seeking him out at Ardrington Park to refund the money, is confronted with a twelve-foot spiked wall. What is it that inspires Ardrington with such terror? Why does he urge Barnes to marry Laurita, Ardrington's lovely South American step-daughter? And how does the timid ex-commercial traveller deport himself when confronted with Laurita's villainous father, Victor Porle? To answer these questions would be to reveal the plot of one of the most ingenious of mysteries which the prince of storytellers has ever written.

PERISHABLE GOODS

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of Blind Corner, etc.

Mr. Dornford Yates has found further adventure for the protagonists of his brilliantly successful novel, "Blind Corner." Because Mansel, Hanbury and Chandos had made a fortune, "Rose" Noble had lost one. He returned to the charge in a letter addressed to Mansel: "The stolen goods will be returned on the receipt of five hundred thousand pounds. . . . No time should be lost, for the goods are

perishable." The "goods" are Mansel's beloved friend Adele Pleydell, between whom and Mansel "there never was so gentle a relation." The three friends, and Tester, the Sealyham, journey to Carinthia where Adele is imprisoned in the almost impregnable Castle of Garth. The tense, grim struggle that was waged in and around the castle was to the death; and when "Rose" fell, shot through the head, Mansel, his task accomplished, lay close to death upon the bed of kings.

THE CROUCHING BEAST

A "Clubfoot" Novel by VALENTINE WILLIAMS

Author of The Eye in Attendance, Mr. Ramost, etc.

The Man with the Clubfoot makes a sensational re-entry upon the stage of fiction. The scene is pre-war Germany; the period, those hot summer weeks of 1914 immediately preceding the clash of arms. In the shadow of the glittering panoply of military Prussia lurks a dim figure, awe-inspiring, ruthless, all-powerful, guarding the secret of the War Party's coming bid for world dominion, ready to pounce upon and destroy those who would reveal the truth to Europe sunk in peace. Of the strange adventure that came to Olivia Dunbar one summer night in the Kommandanten-Haus at Schlitz, and of the merciless march of events that drew her into the long duel of wits between the British Secret Service and the Kaiser's Master Spy, hobbling, grim and forbidding, among the brilliant figures of the Imperial Court, the story tells, and its breathless unfolding is interwoven with the charming romance of a British ex-officer who sought and won rehabilitation in the Secret Service of his country.

SURRENDER

By J. C. SNAITH

Author of Thus Far, Time and Tide, etc.

Two men—one English, one American—desert from the French Foreign Legion. They escape into the African desert. After years of terrible hardship and incredible adventure in places where no white man has trod, they reach Cairo, and thence return to the civilisation of the West. Each owes his life over and over again to the exercise of the other's will. But a woman of great beauty and magnetic personality enters the life of both. She is already pledged to the one, but the other learns that she is vital to his existence. The problem of their future seems insoluble; and it finally involves an act of supreme self-sacrifice on the part of the one which the other is forced to accept.

SOME OF HODDER & STOUGHTON'S NEW NOVELS

LIFE STEPS IN

By RUBY M. AYRES

Author of Broken, The Luckiest Lady, etc.

When selfish Mollie Hambledon came home from Rhodesia, she invited her old school friend, Diana, to play nurse to Mollie's lame child, "the Little General." Then Anthony Hambledon came back too. Anthony and Ana fight against their love beneath the watchful eye of the philandering Mollie, who eventually deserts Anthony, leaving him free. And down to the sea goes Ana, with her friend Jessica and "the Little General"—to await Anthony's coming. And once more Life steps in. . . . Ruby M. Ayres has written nothing finer than this poignant story of a woman's happiness, snatched away in the moment of fulfilment.

THE FLUTES OF SHANGHAI

By LOUISE JORDAN MILN

Author of In a Shantung Garden, Ruben and Ivy Sen, etc.

This is Mrs. Miln's new novel of the real China. John Cadell was a power in Shanghai, a power in China, whose people he understood and loved. In troubled 1927, with the loyal help of Hing Mee-yin, the flute-girl of the Flutes of Shanghai, he dared death at Chinese hands and calumny from European tongues, for the ultimate benefit of both the White and the Yellow races, and risked all to save the posthumous honour of his friend. Ruth Blake travels, with her rich aunt, to China, and helps to unravel the tangled skein and finds her own happiness. Not a laboured account of international differences—a story of human hearts; not a historical treatise, yet it throws a powerful searchlight on China's present poignant dilemma and on the consequent peril to British interests in China.

ROOFS OFF

By RICHMAL CROMPTON

Author of The Wildings, The Thorn Bush, etc.

Richmal Crompton in her new novel takes the roofs off houses—Rosslyn, and Sunnymede, Mentone, The Limes, Balmoral, Glen House, Hess Bank, The Little House, The Beeches, and The Hall—and looks at the folk inside, with ruthless clarity, verity and authenticity, and tells their story. It is a new idea for a novel, and the kind of idea that can only be turned into a big novel—and this is a big novel—by an artist with the sheer ability and skill of craftsmanship of the author of "Millicent Dorrington."

ACCESSORY AFTER THE FACT

By MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS

Author of The Gift in the Gauntlet, The Spell of Sarnia, etc.

Gilda Franklin, attractive and financially independent, had led the comfortable, care-free life of the English professional classes until the day when, lonely and disappointed, she crossed from Lausanne to Evian, on her way to the Green Lake. From that moment, adventures thronged her. The mysterious red-headed man with the heavy bag, who turned out to be the chauffeur at the Hotel du Lac, first aroused her attention. That same evening, when the valley thrilled to the news of the murder on the lonely Pass, and she found to her horror that she had seen the victim's face before, she realised that no course was open to her but to keep her knowledge secret, and remain wholly outside the police investigations. But fate decreed otherwise, and her accidental discovery of the hidden ashes on the mountain-side had unforeseen and startling results.

JUGGERNAUT

By ALICE CAMPBELL

"Juggernaut," by Alice Campbell, is a most remarkable first novel. The story deals with the strange experiences of a nurse employed by an English family living in the South of France, and, although it reaches such dramatic intensity, the logical procession of incidents, in a setting outwardly normal, lends it an air of reality which is so often missing in the realm of books. It is this attribute, coupled with the author's ability to make her characters live the atmosphere which she infuses into her work, which will place "Juggernaut" and Alice Campbell in very high company in their first season.

ONE OF THE CHORUS

By BERTA RUCK

Author of Her Pirate Partner, The Mind of a Minx, etc.

Here is a new romance by Berta Ruck as fresh and scintillating as its title. It is the story of one Melody Wynne, a chorus dancer of good family, and with a temperament which causes her to treat the whole of life as a joy-ride or escapade. When her devoted lover, Keith Cartwright, proposes to her, she tosses up as to whether she shall marry him and go off to India, or continue her profession. The job wins, but only for the time being, and the end of the story shows why it was that Love, this time, got the better of Profession.

THE GOLDEN ROOF

An Historical Novel by MARJORIE BOWEN

Author of The Pagoda, The Countess Fanny, etc.

The title is taken from the Golden Roof (of copper tiles, gilded) on the Imperial Palace at Innsbrück, one of the few tangible memorials left of the greatness of Maximilian I of Habsburg, 1459-1519, Holy Roman Emperor, who dreamed once to roof the whole world with the gold of his achievements. The characters in the tale are all historic, the Emperor himself, Ludovico Sforza, Louis XII of France, Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII of England, Charles Egmont, Duke of Guelders, and the scene is the Tyrol, Vienna, Auysburg, Flanders, Guelders, and France. The love interest is provided by the love story of Maximilian himself with his first wife, Mary of Burgundy.

A TALE THAT IS TOLD

By S. L. BENSUSAN

Author of A Countryside Chronicle, etc.

In "A Tale That is Told" S. L. Bensusan presents his first novel, after more than thirty years of literary activity in many parts of the world in the service of nearly all the leading papers. The story is written in part round the marshlands of the East Coast, and for the rest is laid in the London of the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. The book introduces many of the country types that have appeared in the author's sketches of East Anglia, books like "Village Idylls" and "A Countryside Chronicle," that have achieved noteworthy success.

AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

A Dr. Thorndyke Novel by R. AUSTIN FREEMAN

Author of The Red Thumb Mark, A Certain Dr. Thorndyke, etc.

This latest of all stories of Thorndyke, the ace of detectives, has an added interest in that the author deals with a subject usually avoided in his previous works—the crime of the poisoner. It opens with the arrival home of Barbara Monkhouse, who has been summoned by a telegram and arrives to find her husband dead. Dr. Thorndyke is commissioned to investigate the case, and the story is then occupied with the gradual emergence of the obscure and contradictory evidence, the real meaning of which no one but Thorndyke grasps. Just when it has been decided that the mystery will have to be given up as insoluble, Thorndyke comes suddenly into the open with a complete case for a prosecution.

THE JUDAS TREE

By ALMEY ST. JOHN ADCOCK

Author of Master Where He Will, etc.

Miss Almey St. John Adcock has captured the eye of every discerning critic of the younger school of novelists. Her new book, like the last, "Master Where He Will," has for a setting the cherry orchards, beech woods and chalky uplands of South Buckinghamshire.

THE FOREIGNER

By JOHN TRAVERS (Mrs. G. H. Bell)

Author of Safe Conduct, etc.

Here is a great historical novel of India—of George Thomas who lived in days when there was chaos in India, and war in Europe, when both Mohammedan and Hindu chiefs employed European officers to train and command troops.

THE MYSTERY MAKER

By "SEAMARK"

Author of The Master Mystery, The Man They Couldn't Arrest, etc.

Colonel John Stayne, after gaining a remarkable reputation in the Secret Service, suddenly resigns his position. But from time to time—though always vaguely on the outskirts—this discredited Secret Service emissary is heard of in connection with some great crime. But never did he come up against a harder bunch of crooks than those implicated in the theft of the Demorval diamonds.

TIGER CLAWS

By FRANK L. PACKARD

Author of The Red Ledger, Running Special, etc.

Packard, king of yarn-spinners of the Underworld, goes himself one better in "Tiger Claws." Sailing on their trading schooner, the *Malola*, in the Far East, Keith and Alan Wharton are decoyed ashore by a signal fire on a small and unknown island, and are there treacherously attacked in the darkness by four men. Alan and two native members of the crew are murdered, and Keith is left for dead. He recovers and finds on the island the murdered body of an old man. The only clue to the mystery is a page in this man's diary, in which it is stated that the four men have taken from him "the mahogany box." With the co-operation of "Canary Jim" (who is not what he seems), Keith assumes the character of "Rookie Dyke," an Underworld lag, and starts to run down the four cutthroats. The rest of the story deals with the mysterious mahogany box, a mysterious girl, and a mysterious and elusive criminal figure in the Underworld—and ends with the solution of all the mysteries.

SOME OF HODDER & STOUGHTON'S NEW NOVELS

THE SIX PROUD WALKERS

By FRANCIS BEEDING

Author of The House of Dr. Edwardes, The Seven Sleepers, etc.

As a compendium of the strangest mysteries and the finest thrills nothing more engrossing than "The Six Proud Walkers" has arrived since John Buchan's "Greenmantle." This is an absolutely up-to-date romance of love and adventure, concerned with celebrities of European reputation, and with immediate political situations. It abounds in amazing perils and hair-breadth escapes, without overstepping the bounds of possibility.

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

By LOUIS TRACY

Author of One Girl in a Million, etc.

Had details concerning the disappearance of Lady Alisia, the finding of her body near the sinister house at Putney and the real identity of "Colonel Montgomery" reached the public, other lives, as innocent as that of the "criminal," would have been wrecked beyond repair.

TIDE OF EMPIRE

A Novel of the Gold Camps by PETER B. KYNE

Author of Kindred of the Dust, etc.

The creator of "Cappy Ricks" gives us another superb story—this time a romance of early California which includes a glowing, thoroughly realistic picture of the famous gold rush of '49. Dermot D'Arcy, adventurous and Irish, Josepha Guerrero, a Spanish señorita, and Pathfinder, the thoroughbred, figure chiefly in this tale of the lawless, perilous existence in the gold camps and of the courage brought by a man to a love always in danger.

STONE BLUNTS SCISSORS

By GERARD FAIRLIE

Author of The Man Who Laughed, Scissors Cut Paper, etc.

Passing through Paris on his way home from his travels, Bill Wilson heard a familiar, high-pitched laugh, and found himself face to face with Vic Caryll, gayer and thirstier than ever, and with something, all the same, on his mind. So Wilson got no further than Paris—for the moment. Somebody with a predilection for pale green notepaper had abducted three rich girls, one of them an American, and was keeping the Paris Sureté fully occupied. And Caryll, who had good reason to suspect that it was his old friend Derek Sinclair with whom they were competing again, was hand-in-glove with the Paris Sureté, a situation, it goes without saying, not without its humours.

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